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Michael Winner Interview *David Spiers*

Pasolini *Susan Macdonald*

An Answer to Alan Lovell *Robin Wood*

Film Education *Paddy Whannel*

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Foreword

In this issue we print the first of a set of interviews with British Film Makers. David Spiers has spoken to a number of people who have entered the industry by different routes and he hopes to be able to draw some conclusions about the British Film Industry in a later issue.

The first major article in English on the Italian Film Director Pier Paolo Pasolini also appears in this issue. It provides a considerable amount of background information as well as a firm critical approach. Susan Macdonald is preparing another article for *Screen* in which she considers some of the recent writings on Eisenstein, especially that found in Peter Wollen's recent book *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*.

The important article by Brian Coe on William Fries Greene, which we are reprinting, is continued in this issue. It will be completed in *Screen* No. 4 which will also contain the final articles in the series on the films of Arthur Penn. This issue continues the series with Michael Walker's study of *Mickey One*.

In *Screen* No. 2 we printed an article by Alan Lovell which attempted to consider the 'critical method' which is used by Robin Wood, whose monographs on Hitchcock, Hawks, Antonioni and Penn have been widely read. In this issue Robin Wood offers a spirited reply. This discussion is by no means closed and others may wish to argue some of the points as well as fresh ones in later issues. Some of the issues for discussion are outlined in Paddy Whannel's annual report to the British Film Institute, which for the first time was partly conceived for publication in the S.E.F.T. journal.

K.G.-Y.
T.B.

An Interview with Michael Winner

David Spiers

The series of interviews which follow was undertaken with the object of throwing some light on modern British feature film production. Through the experiences of some contemporary British feature film directors, I have examined the process whereby individual films are set up and been able to discover the freedom of artistic control these directors have. The first interview is with Michael Winner who started out as a documentary film director and has risen by way of second features to directing big budget first features.

DS: Could you give me a brief description of your entry into films? And how you managed to direct films at such an early age?

MW: You must remember in those days, which was eleven years ago, the film industry was completely different to what it is now. It was really very tough. All directors were about forty. I had been a journalist and had been to Cambridge. I went to a friend of mine who was an agent and said will you help get me into films, and he said: 'You can't direct films until you're forty, but you can be an agent'. So I briefly became an agent at £10 a week and then a call boy and an assistant director. I wasn't very good at it and when I was out of work, I took the attitude that if I was going to be out of work I may as well be an out-of-work director as an out-of-work assistant. Eventually I *did* become a director; I directed little documentaries – the first film I made was just a unit of two, myself and a camera man, and we went on a bus, put the lights in with matchsticks and edited as well. The whole film cost £250, a 20-minute short. In those days they didn't have *Look at Life* and the two circuits played a short each week so you had two short films a week twenty minutes long. It gave an opportunity to a lot of young people. Today

David Spiers is an assistant editor at Millbank Films.



Michael Winner on
location for *Hannibal
Brooks*

they have to do it through television which I think is worse. It's a very different medium in my opinion. Really I bluffed my way in and eventually attracted the attention of Lord Braborne and Lewis Gilbert who personally financed me to make a documentary to go out with one of their films. The support of people of that calibre had me noticed.

At that time—it was about 1961/2—they started to make pop films and that provided the break for young directors. The French New Wave had produced a few young directors and the idea of a director in his twenties was not totally unheard of. That's how Sidney Furie came in, you know, with Cliff Richard. Dick Lester came in with *It's Trad Dad*, and the same week I came in with a film called *Play It Cool* with Billy Fury.

DS: Going on from there, how did you break into first features? *West Eleven* was the first?

MW: *West Eleven* was lucky. I was under contract to Daniel Angel as an associate producer, but I could

never associate produce. After *Play It Cool* I did a film called *The Cool Mikado*. I'd realized by then that I couldn't wait for people to give me a good film because they obviously went to people who were considered better. So I commissioned the screen play of *The System* with my own money from an unknown author because I couldn't afford a known one. It was something new and different. But before that came to fruition this man Daniel Angel had *West Eleven* which had been turned down by a lot of people. He'd just sacked Joseph Losey because he was going to turn it into a film that Mr. Angel didn't like. I'm sure it would have been a very good film. He offered it to me because I was around. I took it with both hands. It wasn't a perfect script but it was far better than *Play It Cool*. After that I put my hand in my pocket and did not sit around asking why I didn't get the scripts.

DS: Could you say something about the way films like *I'll Never Forget What's's Name* and *Hannibal Brooks* are set up from a financial point of view?

MW: Up to 1965 there had been an indigenous film industry which existed because there were enough people going to the cinema. Then the cinema attendances dropped and you could no longer expect to get your money back in England from a British film. Therefore the British companies, which only controlled the British market, more or less went out of production and have stayed out of production ever since. There was a brief gap during '63 and '64 and '65 when the British film industry had collapsed to all intents and purposes. For example, when I made *You Must be Joking*, there were only four films being made in the whole country. The gap was filled in 1966 by Americans, because a number of films were suddenly made in England which played full circuits in America – the Bond films, *Tom Jones*, *Alfie*, films like those. The Americans said: 'This is marvellous; we can go to England; we can make a film for a million dollars where it costs two in America – and they're making a lot of money'. So they all came over on the assumption that if you did it once you could do it ten times. But you can't do it with films. It's not something that you make like nuts and bolts. But they thought it was. So the whole structure of financing changed. With a British company in the past you had to get some money from the distributor, some money from

the National Film Finance Corporation, some you had to find privately. We did that on *The System*. By the time we did *I'll Never Forget What's'isname* and *Hannibal Brooks* the situation had changed. The American companies wanted to put up all the money. It wasn't a big risk for them. Take *What's'isname*. I commissioned Peter Draper to write the screenplay from the idea which he sent me in a letter. I worked closely with him before showing it to anybody and ended up with a screenplay I thought was excellent. I had to take it to an American distributor and say: 'Here is 130 pages of paper; I would like you to give me a million dollars to make it'. They normally ask you who's going to be in it. In the case of *What's'isname* the distributor was Universal Pictures (for whom I'd made *The Jokers* which wasn't yet out). They liked Oliver Reed whom I introduced to them – they didn't like him when I first brought him because they hadn't heard of him. Now he's a very hot fellow and they all want him. And I'm very pleased. But in the case of *What's'isname* they said: 'All right, Oliver Reed, you and three-quarters of a million dollars'. They replied within twenty-four hours. It was the first easy film I ever set up. *Hannibal Brooks* I took to United Artists and they agreed immediately to finance the script. By that time I was already much more successful. They are both cases of taking a script and saying: 'Please give me the money'.

DS: Did you have complete freedom on these films?

MW: Yes. Of course it's much easier if you're the director and the producer. This is why more and more directors produce for themselves because producing is really very easy. You haven't got to argue with the producer. You don't want to hear the producer's point of view. It's invariably a load of nonsense and even if it isn't, it's irrelevant because the director's making the film and it should be his film. On these films I *was* both. Now, a distributor will often make suggestions and it's up to the director whether he gets very nervous, and says: 'I think I ought to do *that* to please the distributor'. Or whether he says: 'That's all very nice but bollocks to that, I'm going to do exactly what I want', which is what I do. For example, in the case of Orson Welles, Peter Draper suggested Orson Welles. I got him. Then I said to Universal – I'm very pleased, we've got Orson Welles in the picture. They said, is he in the budget?

I replied well, he's not actually in the budget but what is much more important, he's in the picture. They had a laugh and raised the budget. But I think if I'd gone to them in the initial stages and said: 'Do you think we should have Orson Welles for so much money?' they would have discussed it and they would probably have decided that he didn't sell any tickets. So I always present them with a *fait accompli*. I say: 'I've got so-and-so, this is what he's going to cost, marvellous'. I did the same with *Hannibal Brooks*. I got Oliver Reed and Pollard. Now everyone says how brilliant, but when I got Pollard it was before *Bonnie and Clyde* was such a success. And there was a certain resistance to the money I paid him. United Artists said this is five times as much as he got for *Bonnie and Clyde*. Well, I said, that's like before and after the flood.

DS: What did they raise the budget to on *I'll Never Forget What's 'isname*?

MW: Well, they raised the budget by about \$70,000 to include Orson. *Hannibal Brooks* was more expensive. On both those pictures they agreed without any fuss. On the other hand, I think they could equally well have disagreed if it hadn't been presented in a certain way. You must never let a distributor feel that he's had anything to do with the film at all. All he's got to do is sell it. If it goes wrong, it's no good going to the distributor – well, do you remember you asked me to have so-and-so because you wanted to save money and he's terrible. They don't say to you: 'Well, what a nice fellow, you agreed to save the money'. They say: 'We've got a terrible film'. So the ultimate responsibility is only to the film. Normally what happens on my films is that a distributor sees the rushes and says: 'I don't remember seeing that in the script'. I say: 'Well, you're very lucky. You're getting something extra. Watch tomorrow and you'll see something else not in the script'. I like to think that I am the author of my films in the broadest sense, whether or not I do all the writing – which I don't – but in *What's 'isname*, for example, I did contribute a number of, I think, very important story ideas. On the writing I am second author because I do need somebody to make a major contribution. It then has to be slanted absolutely to the sort of film that I want to make. One has to find writers with whom one can work, because you can never slant a writer to your point of view. I would say there's

no doubt that film is a director's medium. And, if it isn't, the director has failed. On the stage, you're not allowed to alter the words without the author's consent, contractually. On a film you are always allowed to alter anything without the author's consent and I think that really expresses where the nub of the film lies. People say that a film is a team effort and my idea of a team effort is a lot of people doing what I say.

DS: There's a lot of talk now that the Americans are withdrawing from the U.K. and going back to Hollywood. How do you see the future of British feature film production if this should happen?

MW: Well, they are withdrawing to a degree. Recently, on the whole, they have made unsuccessful pictures in England. The successful pictures in the recent months have come from America – *Bonnie and Clyde*, *The Graduate*, *The Producers* – and therefore they are saying the money's in America, let's get back. On the other hand, they are very strongly committed here. They've opened big offices. Our prices have gone up but they're still a bit cheaper. So although they are going to withdraw from the peak of last year, they're not going to leave altogether. But it's always been an irregular industry. The British companies will never go back into making films in any substantial way because they don't control the foreign market and they don't have offices in all the countries. And they can't make films pay in England alone.

DS: I understand that you originally cast Julie Christie for one of your early films?

MW: That was for *West Eleven*. We had Sarah Miles who left at short notice. At the time Julie Christie was under contract to Rank. She'd done some bad comedies but I always thought she was marvellous. The producer didn't even want to test her because she'd been tested for a great many films and been rejected, including *Billy Liar* which she was later taken for because the girl who *was* chosen became ill. And we tested her and I immediately said: 'This is marvellous, we've discovered a very, very big star'. The producer turned to me and said: 'You're absolutely mad, she's a B picture actress and she'll never be anything else'. There were seven people in the room, including the casting department of A.B.C., the Associate Producer and various other hangers on. They all concurred with the Producer –

except one fellow, an A.B.C. casting assistant. Also for the same film I wanted to use Oliver Reed and the producer wouldn't consider having him because he said he was a B picture actor too.

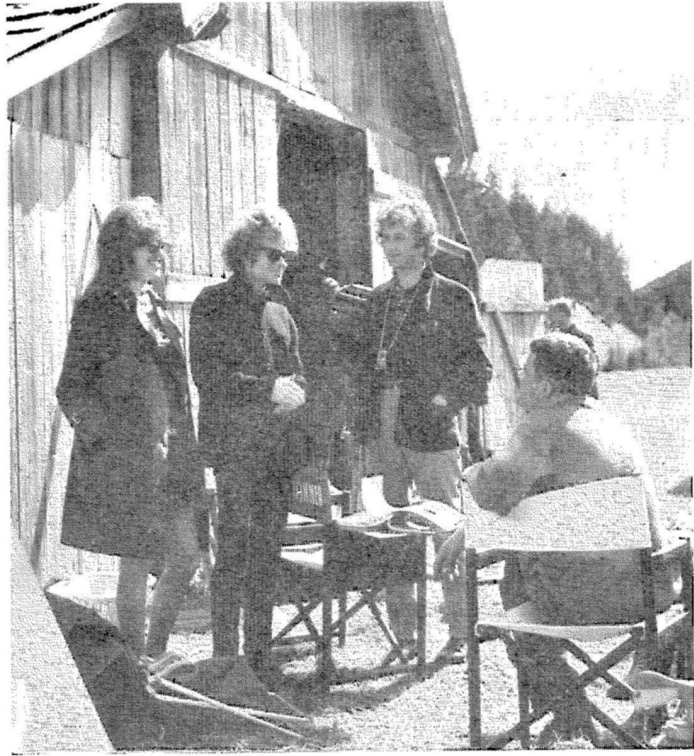
DS: Can you say something about the theme of your films with special reference to *The Jokers* and *I'll Never Forget What's'sname*?

MW: The theme of those and of *The System* and of other pictures, if there is a theme at all, is that of human beings dissatisfied with their environment, which on the face of it should be giving them pleasure because they are seemingly successful. There's no doubt that in the Western world we have comparative affluence. But we have more neurosis, drug taking, nobody is any happier. In these pictures, we have looked at people, suddenly finding themselves dissatisfied with the things they thought they wanted. The characters try to make a gesture, to prove their individuality, by getting out. But, of course, there is nowhere to go and they end up where they started. And if they have tried, I would think they must be happier because they have tasted the alternative. I find that an interesting theme.

DS: I find that most of your characters are distinctively upper middle class and this is especially true in *I'll Never Forget What's'sname* and *The Jokers*. Is the return to the public school in *What's'sname* in any way autobiographical?

MW: Yes! It was meant to symbolize more than that one structure of society. In *Hannibal Brooks*, the hero is a working class soldier. Oliver Reed plays him; Oliver Reed is not working class and plays him in a rather classless way. He doesn't put on a cockney accent, but again he is a man who is unable to commit himself to his society. In this case he was a man in a highly patriotic society during the war. He's never been able to commit himself to the war, he's never been able to commit himself to anything. He's just a lone fellow who finds himself stuck with an elephant in the Munich Zoo, and he finds, against his will, that he enjoys nurturing it. As the war is ending, he makes a commitment to the safety of this elephant, making an insane journey across the Alps to take it to safety which really is not even necessary. People don't commit themselves for the good they're doing. You know, like people who are demonstrating over

Mrs Pollard, Michael
J. Pollard, Michael
Winner and Oliver
Reed on location for
Hannibal Brooks



Vietnam, they're not doing it for the Vietnamese at all. It's the same as this man with his elephant. Everybody has something they care deeply about, which is their own personal need.

Every film I've made has been really about a gesture. *The System* was. It was about a man who was getting dissatisfied with small town society and wanted to get out of it by having an affair and hopefully going off with this wealthy girl into a better world. *The Jokers* was about two young men who wanted to make a gesture and set themselves above their contemporaries in initiative rather than in money. *What's his name* is about a man who wanted to make a gesture to get out and *Hannibal Brooks* is about a man who wants to make a gesture for himself – to be different from his immediate environment. The thing that attracted me to *The Games* was the same. Here you have a film which is about a number of people all over the world who spend their life training to run for twenty-six miles in the Olympic Games. It strikes me as complete insanity. But it's no



more insane than marching up and down saying, 'Stop bombing Vietnam' and throwing stones at the American Embassy. It's just a gesture.

AIDA
and Oliver Reed in
Hannibal Brooks

DS: Is that the role of the advertisement at the end of *I'll Never Forget What's's'isname*?

MW: The hero of *What's's'isname* was an advertising man, and that's all he was fit to be. All this other stuff is pipe-dreams and he makes what he thinks is a great gesture to show that he's better than an advertising man, but it's a ludicrous gesture. And it fails, because he isn't particularly good. Some of the critics in this country said what a terrible commercial this was. *The Times* critic said: 'This is an appalling commercial, and Michael Winner is a fool for making it'. Well, it's meant to be an appalling commercial – that's the entire point. It wasn't me making it, it was Andrew Quint in the film who was an appalling commercial maker. I can't be responsible for the critic of *The Times*. If he doesn't know what he sees on the screen, that's his lookout.

DS: Does that also explain all the references to Quint as a genius?

MW: He's a 'commercial genius'. I don't think anyone who makes commercials is a genius. The only people who think commercials are made by geniuses are the

people who make them! Someone who can't get anywhere says he's doing commercials because he wants to. I don't believe it. He's doing commercials because he can't do anything else.

DS: In *What's his name* there is a sequence in which Oliver Reed races upstairs to be confronted by Orson Welles, his old boss. Can you explain it? What is it supposed to do?

MW: The main point in that scene is that Orson Welles represents the man totally spoiled by his excess of possessions and wealth. He has a very great soliloquy in which he says that in the 20th century the main product of all human endeavour is waste. And that, in a way, is a main theme of the film – that in spite of all this technological advancement, and scientific progress, the human mind is not being made more at ease. People are being born today and are going to be born during the next twenty years into a concrete zoo resulting from the encroachment of the cities. This man had all the creature comforts and had a neurotic, rotting mind. One of the points is that Orson Welles and Oliver Reed were indistinguishable. Oliver Reed was a younger Orson Welles. He wasn't the young rebel; he was in fact exactly where he should be – making rather bad commercials.

DS: To a certain extent *I'll Never Forget What's his name* seems to be influenced by Losey's *Accident* – the game at the school reunion and even the accident.

MW: People are apt to say that this film is influenced by that film, and ruder people are apt to say that you have copied. I never saw *Accident*. I should have seen it, but I never did. Other people said that *The System* was influenced by some film of Fellini's which I also haven't seen. I think it's inevitable that people who are living in the same society are going to come up with slightly similar views about it. It always depresses me when the critics try and be clever and say: 'Ah well, Mr. Winner has copied that'. They don't know what I've seen. If I spent as much time seeing films as the critics, I would never have time to make any; so, although I see as many as I can, I don't see everything that's made.

DS: *I'll Never Forget What's his name* seemed to have been worked out in an extremely detailed way in the

shooting script; I was conscious of an enormous number of shots which seem to have been worked out precisely beforehand.

MW: I never work out shots at all. I take more shots in my films than most people. For example, *I'll Never Forget What's'sname* had about 1600 set ups in it. Most people's films have about 800. That gives mine a certain staccato rhythm that I personally like, but some people find it a bit too quick for them. Well, that's too bad. They've got to tune their minds up. But I don't work out shots, and if I get a screen play like *The Games* which is broken down into shots, I completely retype it and take them all out. All I have in my mind sometimes at the beginning of the day is one or two key set ups. On the whole, I play it off the cuff. But I do spend an enormous amount of time editing, making nearly all the cuts myself and that is where it comes together in a way that it looks as if the shots have been preconceived. Some directors do exactly the opposite. That would be very boring for me. Hitchcock plans it all but I just couldn't do it. What's the point of getting up in the morning? You may as well stay in bed and phone it through.

DS: *I'll Never Forget What's'sname* wasn't particularly well received here. Can you think of any reason why you haven't been generally accepted by the critics here?

MW: That's a difficult one. *What's'sname* was not well received here and I was disappointed. It was very well received in America, on the Continent, in Australia and all over the world. The only country where we didn't, on the whole, have good reviews was England. We had three or four here that were good and the rest were terrible. Everybody is affected by the reviews. No one likes to buy a paper when they think they've done a good job and read that they're idiots. I've yet to find any genius in this business, including Orson, who likes that. But it's part of the game and there's no point in worrying about it. *The Jokers* was very well reviewed here of course. The critics sometimes tend to be a little affected by background. I had the advantage in America of coming out first time with a good film. They never saw any of the earlier films where I was under the pressure of having to do films I didn't want to do. I can only assume that's the reason. I think ultimately the

film gets globally the treatment it deserves. But it's no good just taking the London Press. The Provincial Press in England on *What's isname* was excellent. I'm not talking about the *Hogs Norton Gazette* – I'm talking about the *Yorkshire Post* and the other major provincial papers.

DS: Do you think there's a personal element there?

MW: I don't know any of the critics but it's possible there is a certain resentment of early success in this country. They may have read that I'm a wealthy fellow; they may feel that I have had it a little too easy and that it was time that I took a knock.

DS: What makes you an interesting director is the value you have given to original screenplays. Do you think this might become more general in future in this country?

MW: It has become more general, even in the last three years. When I first started making feature films, people would not make originals. I shouldn't think there were more than 5 per cent originals made, and today it's probably 40 per cent. On the whole the film distributors don't know what's good or bad. They have no idea at all. Therefore they like some sort of good housekeeping seal on the material. If they can see that it's a book or a play that's been very successful, they feel safer because they think that the public have demanded that commodity already. What they don't realize is that if the public have demanded it in the shape of a book or a play, it may be quite wrong for a film. I started with original material through financial necessity. It is now much easier to get original material because a lot of original material has hit it rich. So now they say: 'Original material's done quite well in the past, we don't mind taking it'.

DS: Have your later films been generally financially successful? Is financial success an important criteria for you when you get down to making a film?

MW: Well, financial success is not an important criteria for me in general. I never make a film and say I hope it is going to be a financial success. I make the film because I, personally, like the subject.

DS: Have you got anything to say about *The Games*?

MW: No, I don't feel very definitive about *The Games* yet because it's rather early days. It is set in five locations – Australia, Tokyo, Rome, Prague and London and we are going to all those places even if it's only for a few shots, to give it realism. This should give it a sort of freshness. We can't go to Prague, but we're going to Vienna which is really very similar. I don't know if it's commercial, but that's not my concern. 20th Century Fox have got to worry about that.

DS: Is it another original screenplay?

MW: It is the first non-original screenplay I've done for a very long time. It was based on a book – the script was written by a Yale Professor called Eric Seigal. I did quite a lot of rewriting, but it was a good script originally. I read the book sometime after and I can almost say it's an original script. It doesn't follow the book at all. The book deals with the politics behind the scenes: where the Olympic Games should be held and why. That element is completely taken out of the film. The only reason that financial success is slightly important is that you are in an industry of an expensive commodity. You cannot make a film today for less than a million dollars. And, therefore, when you go to a distributor and ask him for the money, he looks at your success record, and if the last six films have made money, he can reasonably expect that this one will as well. My films since *The System* have all covered themselves and made a profit. Some of them have made a small profit, but I haven't had any big fiasco. It makes things very easy for me today and I haven't compromised artistically in order to get there. Well, I wouldn't be pleased if I had.

DS: What about the profit on *What's's'isname*?

MW: *What's's'isname* is a film I thought nobody would want to see. When I went to the distributor, they gave me a much smaller percentage of profit and a much worse deal than I got on *The Jokers*. When I asked: 'Why have you given me such a bad deal, in comparison with *The Jokers*?' they said: 'We think this is a less commercial picture. We don't think it's going to make so much money'. I had to be absolutely honest and agree with them. To my surprise, *What's's'isname* has been very successful which shows that you must never ask

how many people are going to see your film because you cannot know. Every big success has been turned down – the Bond films, *Tom Jones*, the lot. You just don't know. It's not the film creator's job to worry about that. He just gets on with it and makes the film.

Pasolini: Rebellion, Art and a New Society

Susan Macdonald

Pier Paolo Pasolini is a versatile Italian poet, novelist, filmmaker, philologist, translator and critic. Born in Bologna in 1922, he has proved to be the most controversial figure in modern Italian art. His unrelenting attacks on bourgeois Italy and its institutions, together with his use of 'obscene' language and situations, have made him a target for reactionaries. He has been prosecuted for blasphemy or obscenity on several occasions, in 1951 for his novel *Ragazzi di Vita* (Children of Life), in 1963 for his film *La Ricotta* (The Curd Cheese) in which a starving extra dies from indigestion on the cross, and in 1968 for *Teorema* (Theorem). In 1958 one of his poems published in *Officina* after the death of Pope Pius XII caused a scandal that resulted in the magazine's demise.

His rebellious attitudes derive from his own Oedipal difficulties, from his hatred of his father and his excessive love of his mother. They dominate his work right up to the recent autobiographical film of *Oedipus Rex*, which seems to have released his unconscious drives, and enabled him to write the verse play *Affabulazione* in which he recognizes his early love for his father. It also accounts for the change of style in *Teorema*.

Pasolini first became known as a poet. At seventeen he began writing in Friulan, the language of the Italian peasants, from whom his mother was descended, though she herself didn't speak it. His reasons for writing in Friulan were partly rebellious, for his father, a fascist of noble origins, disliked any language other than pure Italian. Pasolini dedicated his first book of Friulan verse (1942) to his father. His reasons were also aesthetic, having grown up in the 20's and 30's, during the era of hermetic poetry in Italy. This movement was dominated by Ungaretti and Quasimodo who sought to find a new language for poetry, a language stripped of ornament, with a minimum of words and punctuation that

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The Gospel According to St. Matthew, 'The Road to Calvary'

could more appropriately express the anguish of the time. Pasolini, while rejecting this obscurity, felt the need for a new poetic language and turned to Friulan. He even founded a small academy of Friulan poetry.

He moved to Friuli during the war. There he became actively aware of the class struggle, personified by the Friulan *braccianti* (day-labourers) and the wealthy land-owners. He joined the Communist Party for a year, 1947-48, and assimilated various Marxist texts. The Marxist writer who exerted the most influence on him was Antonio Gramsci, the leading theoretician in Italian communism, who helped to found the Party in 1921 and led it from 1923 until his arrest in 1926.

Gramsci differed from Marx in looking at the whole complex of political, social and cultural institutions and ideas, rather than at the economic foundations of society. He saw cultural problems as especially important in periods following revolutionary activity when the cultural front becomes the principal area of conflict in the class struggle. Therefore, he stressed the role of the socialist intellectual as a teacher who

educates the masses prior to rebellion. It was views like these that endeared him to the Italian intellectual.

Pasolini also achieved a close understanding of the pre-bourgeois peasant way of life. In their religion, with its faith in miracles and the mystic, he found a similar approach to his own, a way that he describes as sacral, reverential and child-like. It is this sort of religious attitude that he believes is totally alien to the bourgeoisie, and it is this sort of religion that permeates his works, and mystifies those who know him only as an affirmed agnostic and Marxist.

When he came to Rome in 1950, he found further fuel for his Marxist views. After a year of poverty, he started teaching in a school in Ciampino and went to live in Ponte Mammolo, a slum in the outskirts of Rome. Here he found a more primitive world than that of the peasants, a world in which bourgeois morality counted for nothing and the only code was self-preservation. Much of his work during the fifties and early sixties, novels, poetry and films, centres on it. He aimed to achieve an exact description of this sub-proletarian world.

His first novel *Ragazzi di Vita* was published in 1951. Pasolini was brought to trial for literary obscenity. The supposed obscenity lies partly in the language, the sub-proletarian dialect that is unashamedly physical and mainly anal, and partly in the lives that Pasolini depicts. He describes an under-privileged segment of society who live in an amoral limbo, stealing, whoring, drinking, smoking, their ways through life, till they meet their violent, seemingly arbitrary deaths. They rarely work: jobs are hard to come by and stealing is easier. They have little loyalty to each other, stealing from so-called friends, while the sick and the disabled are fair game. They have little respect for anyone – only fear of the police: Alduccio attacks his mother with a knife when she calls him a good-for-nothing; Amerigo dies in his desperate attempt to evade a second dose of prison, nearly drowning, slashing his wrists, then jumping from a window. Death means little; there are violent deaths in most chapters. Once dead they are soon forgotten: 'They haven't any respect for the living, so what should they have for the dead?' remarks Pasolini, describing Amerigo's funeral.

The novel is built round a series of episodes in the lives of boys in the area, going from war-time to 1950. There is no well-defined hero, though *Il Ricetto* is more closely followed than the others. In some ways his progress resembles that of

Tommaso in Pasolini's second novel *Una Vita Violenta* (1959, translated as *A Violent Life*, 1968). Both change after a spell in prison, becoming more aloof and detached from their gangs. Both achieve a sort of morality, though this is far more marked in Tommaso. Il Riccetto swims lazily across the river and back, a feat that symbolizes his attainment of manhood. His taunts at Genesio and his brothers cause a tired Genesio to attempt the return journey. As Il Riccetto sees him struggling for his life and realizes there is nothing he can do, he runs from the river, close to tears.

Tommaso, in *Una Vita Violenta*, passes through several stages as he grows up. His early amoral and fascist existence changes after his imprisonment, helped by his family's move from their derelict shack to a council flat. At first, he revels in his near bourgeois life, but his ideals change when he develops T.B. In hospital, he becomes a Communist sympathizer, helping the patients who are organizing a revolt against their conditions. Once back in civilian life, his new views of humanity are challenged by the flood which wrecks the slum where he used to live. Tommaso heroically helps with the rescue work, but this proves too much for his health and he dies soon afterwards from a violent attack of T.B.

Pasolini always remains detached from his characters. He is not interested in interpreting behaviour. He describes what he sees. His objectivity is alarmingly emotive, particularly when he contrasts a tragedy with the surrounding scenery. While Tommaso and Lello are waiting for the tram in the early hours of the morning, he describes their surroundings, then the abrupt horror of Lello, his hand and foot 'a mashed heap of blood and bone' where the tram has run over him. 'Meanwhile, around Lello now, the walls of the damp houses, the walls of the station, the faces of the people, the stones, everything has become lighter, almost white, in the first rays of the sun, which was slowly coming up, as always, over the city.' He seems to emphasize the inevitability and seeming arbitrariness of his characters' lives, manipulated by a sort of fate that they cannot overcome.

Homosexuality often features in the sex lives of his characters, an easy way of making money in Rome, though Tommaso has little luck when he needs money to take out his girlfriend. 'Dirty whore,' thinks Tommaso furiously as he watches a prostitute succeed where he has failed, though he later viciously relieves her of her earnings. Girl-friends mean

little. Il Riccetto gets engaged at one point, but the girl is a status symbol with whom he is readily bored. Tommaso is more involved with Irene, but his affection tends to be based on his own needs rather than hers and he, like Il Riccetto, prefers the company of his own sex.

Apart from the occasional girl-friend, Pasolini's female characters are whores or mothers, sometimes both. When Shitter in *A Violent Life* discovers his mother is a whore, he threatens to kill her unless she gives him a regular share of the takings, which she does. And this is typical of their attitudes. In Pasolini's first film *Accattone*, Accattone lives off his girl-friend's takings, and, when she is jailed, he attempts to put his new girl, Stella, on the streets.

His poetry like his novels depicts the lives of the sub-proletariat, poignant, haunting, often outspoken, their imagery and impact tend to be superior to that of his novels:

'Beneath shut eyelids, among his
lice laughs the boy from Cassino,
sold by his parents, on the raging
banks of the Aniene, a killer
and a whore nurse him, through
the colonial nights when Ciampino
blinded with washed-out stars
hums with the airplanes of kings,
and along the boulevards, the beat
of sex's sentinels, in devastating
waits around the earthy latrines, . . .'¹

Pasolini himself sometimes echoes his character's excesses. He has been taken to court for helping a gangster escape; convicted of trying to hold up a gas station attendant, and accused of homosexual offences in his private life. Each of his early works is an act of rebellion against a bourgeois society he hates, a hatred which he admits has an emotional and not a moral basis.

Pasolini's style is that of 'a *pasticheur*'. His novels operate on three levels: the characters' speech is in dialect; their interior monologues are in free indirect speech; lastly, there is his own narrative. In his poetry he uses a mixture of material: dialect poetry, decadent poetry and socialist poetry. The most obvious influences are the nineteenth-century poets Carducci and Pasoli, while among modern poets Saba stands out. He tends to use traditional forms and meters, but seeks to lower 'the language to the level of prose,

that is, of the rational, the logical, and the historical'. Through this combination he discharges his passion and indignation, but always in a controlled manner so that words and form achieve a balance of poetic intensity.

Pasolini turned to film-making because he saw it as the most immediate medium in which he could express his passion for life, for sensual reality. He claims that the cinema represents reality with reality, that unlike literature it has no need of metaphors. For this reason he dislikes using actors, save for the parts of actors. In his early works, he chose his characters by the 'rule of analogy', his peasants are genuine peasants, his sub-proletarian characters come from the sub-proletarian world, his bourgeois characters are bourgeois in real life, and so on.

But Pasolini's reality is not naturalistic. It is, he says, philosophical and sacral. He tries to enlarge the reality he represents by dubbing his characters, preferably with a different voice, to make them more mysterious, larger than life. He often shoots them in stylized poses: shapes and faces that register an astonishing range of successive emotions, like the mother in the first part of *Oedipus Rex* as she feeds the baby in the field. Adoration, apprehension, joy, sadness, fear, pass over her face as she gazes past the camera, till she finally shrugs away her doubts.

When Pasolini made *Accattone* in 1961 he had no technical knowledge of film-making. He had written a few scripts for Soldati, Fellini, and others, on the strength of his first novel, but that was all. Thus the style in *Accattone* is very simple. He shot each episode in two or three takes, at the most, and never varied his camera position. He achieves a stationary, brutal directness, a succession of images that etch the violence, squalor, and pathetic nobility onto the memory. Through the most violent scenes he plays the music of Bach, to remind the audience that beyond this ugly façade there are people who see and feel, who are part of the complex of humanity. He was severely criticized for using 'inappropriate' music, for degrading Bach and religion. But the criticisms are irrelevant to the shocking impact of the combination.

His cinematic style underlines his sense of pastiche, being a combination of several styles, principally Mizoguchi, Chaplin and Dreyer. He sees these directors as 'epic-mythic': they see things from a point of view that is absolute, essential and, in a way, sacral. This is the same way in which Pasolini

sees things: 'My view of the world is always at bottom of an epical-religious nature.'² Dreyer's influence shows in his use of the close-up with its sense of figurative, visual severity: 'Visual severity and austerity are indeed the dominating value in my films,' says Pasolini. 'I try . . . to avoid all that is ornamental . . . I try to reduce my own exiguity to one object only because my inspiration . . . is above all else painting and, specifically, the painting of Masaccio, an exceedingly visual painter in that the matter he presents to us has a chiaroscuro violence of shocking plasticity . . .'²

Accattone's world is the world of the *borgate*, the sub-proletariat of Pasolini's novels: 'The world of the *borgate* is pre-Christian,' says Pasolini. 'It has been preserved by the structure of the Papacy, which imposed itself upon this culture and froze it protectively in time. The face of it is baroque, but the understructure is simple; it is built not on love but on a code of honour.'³

In a sense *Accattone* is a regressive step for Pasolini. Tommaso in *A Violent Life* became a Communist, but Accattone turns away from this, for the film was conceived during the era of the Tambroni government when Pasolini was disillusioned about the state of Communism in Italy that had inspired the ideological optimism of *A Violent Life*.

Like the characters in *Ragazzi di Vita*, both die violently, Tommaso coughing blood from his tubercular lungs, Accattone crashing a motor-cycle while trying to escape the police. This is characteristic of Pasolini, who believes that death determines life, and only through death can life acquire a sense. For him death is the maximum of epicness and myth. It is irrational and this is why his characters' deaths so often seem arbitrary. It is also a way of coping with his own aggressive impulses.

The role of death is also stressed in Pasolini's second film, *Mamma Roma* (1962), when Mamma Roma's son, Ettore, dies in prison. But *Mamma Roma* differs from *Accattone* in that the main characters strive for material, petit bourgeois ideals. Mamma Roma sees that Ettore is brought up with these ideals. When he discovers she is a prostitute, he can't accept it as would a member of the sub-proletariat, but has a traumatic collapse which is instrumental in causing his death.

Christ dies violently on the cross at the end of *Il vangelo secondo Matteo* (*The Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, 1964),

screaming and accompanied by cut-in shots of tumbling buildings. Like Pasolini's other heroes he is a rebel. His Lenin-like figure, neurotic and fanatic, moves among the peasantry, a passionate revolutionary, threatening and cajoling, a man with a mission who has 'come not to bring peace but a sword'. There is little, or nothing, of the gentle divine in Pasolini's Christ. This is the Christ who calls the temple a 'den of thieves' and hurls the stalls to the ground; the Christ who is obsessed by his beliefs in his divinity, by his constant need to prove himself worthy of his father, by his need to be worshipped: 'I have come to set a man against his father . . . He who loves father and mother more

The Gospel According to St. Matthew, 'Mary (Pasolini's Mother) at the Cross'



than me, is not worthy of me.' He is a homosexual Christ, needing the adoration of his disciples, but isolated and able to give little affection in return. He is a Christ who spurns his mother with the words: 'Who is a mother, who are brethren to me?' but who suffers from his own act of rejection as he strides away in tears.

Pasolini's Christ is both Marxist and religious: 'My film is a reaction against the conformity of Marxism. The mystery of life and of death and of suffering – and particularly of religion – is something which Marxists do not want to consider. But these are, and always have been, questions of great importance for human beings.'⁴

Like his other works it has the ingredients of autobiography: 'I was fascinated by the contradictions in myself: the pre-

Marxist element, the seeds of Christian culture which is part of all of us, part of our childhood and the Marxist outlook. They view Christianity historically and would have us remove the mythical, superstitious part. But in reality this is impossible. In two thousand years the gospel has become embellished by the tradition of piety – surrounded by human beings.’⁴ Because of this tradition Pasolini sets out to ‘remythicize’ the story, giving a representation of Christ’s life plus 2,000 years of myth. He does not attempt a historical reconstruction, but finds his characters and settings by his rule of analogy. In Southern Italy he found primitive settings that he saw as analogous to ancient Palestine, with the city of Matera representing Jerusalem. Christ was played by a Spanish student, Enrique Irazoqui, a Marxist sympathizer; Judas was a Communist truck driver; John the Baptist was a Communist university professor in literature. Each was carefully selected from the appropriate strata of society and ability. The casting of his mother, by analogy, as the mother of the older Christ underlines the element of autobiography.

The Gospel is more complicated stylistically than *Accattone*. Pasolini found that the sacral style with its simplicity and consistency did not work. He combined it with documentary scenes that approach cinema vérité in the trial scene, for example. He shot each scene from two or three angles using two cameras. Then he composed the film in the cutting room. Many of his shots are in close-up: there are some pans and some tracking shots, but basically his shooting technique is simple. He based this work on several styles in painting. The pharisees’ costumes are taken from the paintings of Piero della Francesca and there are numerous references to Byzantine painting. This demonstrates his way of showing Christ as he has been mythicized by various cultures over the past 2,000 years. His musical analogies play a similar role. He used Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*, works by Prokofiev, Mozart and Webern, and Odetta’s version of the Negro spiritual ‘Sometimes I feel like a Motherless Child’.

Pasolini is the sole creator of his films, the writing, directing, sets, locations, characters, costumes, music, are all ordained by him, though he has collaborators like costume designers to realize his ideas. In spite of the fact that he has had no training his methods are remarkably successful. *The Gospel* won five awards at the Venice Film Festival, plus the International Catholic Film Office Award. It also caused a certain amount of uproar in Catholic countries at the thought that a confirmed Marxist and disbeliever could attempt such

a subject. With memories of *La Ricotta* (1963), which led to a four-month suspended sentence on a charge of public defamation against the nation and against Catholicism, he was pelted with rotten eggs at the Venice Festival. But the undeniable religiousness of the film silenced all but the Marxists.

Marxist criticism of *The Gospel* may have influenced Pasolini's next film *Uccellacci e Uccellini* (Hawks and Sparrows, 1965). The two main characters, father and son, live in a pre-bourgeois, a-historical state, while Italy changes around them. They are introduced to Marxism in the shape of the crow, and finally assimilate the ideology by eating it, for good teaching remains inside; it is an act of communion. The crow is an autobiographical figure, says Pasolini, there is almost total identity between me and the crow.

With *Edipo Re* (*Oedipus Rex*, 1967) Pasolini reaches the peak of his autobiographical rebellion. He consciously reconstructs the origins of his Oedipus complex, exploring his relationships with the father he hated and the mother he adored.

The first part of *Oedipus* is set in modern Bologna and is intended to be a fairly exact evocation of Pasolini's birth and early childhood there. His own father was a nationalistic army officer, an authoritarian, egocentric, tyrannical fascist, according to Pasolini, so the young father in the film appears in soldier's uniform. He shares none of the mother's delight in the baby, eyeing it with hate, jealousy and thoughts of murder: 'You are here to take my place in the world . . . to rob me of all I possess . . . In fact you are already robbing me of her love,' he thinks as he gazes into the pram, while the baby gazes back, aware of his hate. Later the baby watches his parents dancing, and a sudden explosion of fireworks describes the tensions that have built up inside him. When his parents make love later that evening, he seems well aware of what is happening.

Pasolini is crudely emphasizing the super-ego represented by the father repressing the child. But if Pasolini's ideas on psycho-analytic theory are naïve, he is here artistically effective and convincing, more so than in the rest of the film. When Pasolini abruptly cuts from the modern father clutching the baby's ankles in a fit of hate to the baby bound by wrists and ankles being carried across a Moroccan desert, the connections seem too tenuous. Pasolini is attempting to move from his own Oedipal situation into a generalized

concept of the Oedipus complex, based on the myth of Oedipus. He has said that the basic operation in the film is to reproject psychoanalysis onto the myth. But it doesn't work on this level. Parts of the central part of the film work only as an extension of the first part: the vicious killing of Laius and the passionate love-making with Jocasta are the most obvious features, with the latter echoing the parents' love-making in the beginning.

The death of Laius is enacted with a semi-conscious awareness, a ritualization of Oedipal hate. It is the affirmation of the desire expressed in the script of *Orgy* (1965) in which the only words occur at the end as the 'hero' tells of his incomparable pleasure in killing his father. Oedipus, tormented by seemingly irrational guilt and fear that is only explicable by his knowledge of the situation, kills each soldier in Japanese samurai style. But when he finally confronts an unarmed Laius who raises his symbolic crown of authority to his head, he laughs jeeringly and kills with vicious relish.

Much of the film operates on this aggressive, passionate level: the attack on the prophet, Tiresias and the confrontations with Creon and the sphynx. Oedipus is innocent, says Pasolini, he has no desire to discover the truth; he is a victim of his emotions and his life. But this Oedipus is not innocent: he is tormented under the surface, and refuses to accept it: 'The abyss into which you thrust me is in you,' the sphynx tells him, but Oedipus would rather not know. As the truth slowly unfolds, he is forced to accept it. In full knowledge of the facts he convinces Jocasta, then passionately makes love to her, with the conscious incest hammered home by his cry of 'Madre!' Gestures like this mar the film by their obviousness. But his anguish when he finds Jocasta hanging, strips off her clothes, and symbolically castrates himself by stabbing out his eyes, is more effective.

Much of the film is in silence, the main dialogue being the Sophocles' text, for Pasolini believes that 'an image can have an allusive force equivalent to that of a word.' It is one of his main skills as a director that he can in fact achieve this: he does not need words to express his characters' thoughts. His images are painted in the powerful reds, blues, yellows, greens and browns of Morocco. The Japanese music drums and screams to act as metaphors for Oedipus' inner conflicts, music that is deliberately chosen to be outside history. He also uses Rumanian folk music for the same reason, both are almost impossible to locate without prior knowledge.



Oedipus Rex
'The Father observes
the Child'

Oedipus Rex is a patchy film, moments of violence and power are spoilt by naïvety and overstatement, and, for Pasolini, parts are surprisingly insensitive. The central sequence, which Pasolini sees as a kind of dream, jars with the beginning and the end, when the modern blinded Oedipus tries to re-enter society, sublimating his faults by playing his pipe. (This is also a deliberate Marxist gesture, for Oedipus plays first to the bourgeoisie, then, disgusted, plays an Italian Resistance tune, Russian in origin, to the factory workers.) In itself the central sequence gains measurably in effect and pace when the Sophoclean text begins. He would have been better advised to concentrate on this, or on his own complex, and not try and combine the two with a generalized treatment of psycho-analytic theory and the myth.

This personal climax constitutes an artistic turning point for Pasolini. In *Teorema* his approach to his characters is markedly different, and his style is closely reminiscent of Antonioni. For the first time, he concentrates equally on a whole series of characters, superbly observing each one's inner conflicts, instead of concentrating on the conflicts of a single rebellious figure. The tormented violence in *Teorema* is more subtle than the fury of Christ in the temple, or the savage enjoyment of Oedipus' patricide. Mysterious, impenetrable, isolated by their fears and obsessions, the characters gaze through the camera, fighting their own particular hells.

The characters comprise a bourgeois household in Milan. Their lives are abruptly changed by the sudden arrival of a young man. Each member of the household is fascinated by his exceptional qualities, but can only relate to him sexually. Each in an agony of indecision, guilt and apprehension begs his physical love, and each is unable to recover from the experience. Not even Pasolini knows who he is: 'He has something of the divine, but he's not Christ. Maybe he's an

angel, maybe the devil, maybe God . . .'⁵ Whoever he is, his role is to show to each of them the desert of their existence. Pasolini sees sex as a basic cause of emotional disturbances in bourgeois society and, therefore, the easiest way through which they could be revealed.

When the Young Man announces his departure, the effect is traumatic: none of them feel capable of continuing without him, of coping with the evil he has shown them. The maid, Emilia, returns to the peasant village of her youth, where she sits in the farmyard, eating nettles and refusing to speak. To the villagers she becomes a sort of mad saint, capable of healing and levitation. Being non-bourgeois in origin, she is more capable than the others of receiving divinity. But her supposedly supernatural powers bring her little comfort, and she finally elects to be buried alive on the boundary between peasantry and bourgeois society, where a new road is being built. She rejects the materialism she has known in Milan, but her rejection is not complete. In close shot her burial ground looks like the desert with which Pasolini illustrates each character's interior.

The neuroses that Pasolini reveals to his characters are typically bourgeois: the boy becomes withdrawn and tries to escape from himself by creating perfection in his painting: 'It must be perfect,' he says, frantically slapping paint on to glass, 'so no one can find out that the author is no good.' But escape cannot work and his painting becomes less meaningful, less satisfying, until, blindfolded, he throws paint at the canvas and lets chance determine the shape. The girl has been shown her fear of men and feels she can only conquer this through her relationship with the Young

Oedipus Rex

'Oedipus (Franco
Citti) and Jocasta
(Silvana Mangano)'



Man. When he goes she becomes psychotic, measures out her grave on the lawn, and takes to her bed, stiff and staring in a catonic trance until she is carried off to hospital. The mother sees that her life is a void, full of false values and mistaken ideas, but her attempt to escape reveals her sexual insecurity, her basic lack of identity. She picks up a succession of young men, but fails to get what she wants from any of them. She turns to religion, but to the bourgeois religion of Catholicism that Pasolini sees as superficial, external rather than internal. The father, a wealthy industrialist, is harder hit than the rest: 'You have destroyed me utterly,' he says to the Young Man. 'I can't see any way of recovering my identity.' Totally self-absorbed and unable to cope with external events, he gives his factory to the people, a Marxist gesture done for non-Marxist reasons. Ashamed and intrigued by the homosexuality that has been revealed in him, he resists the advances of a pick-up on Milan station, undresses, then staggers naked across the desert.

Pasolini was prosecuted on a charge of obscenity, though for artistic reasons he was acquitted. His frank treatment of sexual desire was considered permissible. Often the camera dwells in close-up on the crutch of male trousers, particularly on the Young Man, and on his discarded clothes which the mother eyes longingly. Homosexual desire is treated as overtly as heterosexual: the phallic paintings of Francis Bacon are used as metaphors for the boy's desire. Also, there are shots of the boys in bed together.

Like all his work *Teorema* is strikingly effective with its dignified, austere shots and its pastel shades. They contrast markedly with the harsh colours in *Oedipus Rex*. In the first part the pace tends to flag as the Young Man moves inevitably from one character to the next, but the beautifully controlled passion of the second part, as each struggles to cope, is observed with a minute awareness and sympathy that sometimes seems lacking in his work. It is almost a silent film, the main dialogue coming in the confessions. Like *The Gospel* it received the Catholic Film Office's Grand Prize at the Venice Festival.

Throughout his work Pasolini is searching for a way of life that is both Marxist and embraces his feelings about religion. Often the two are confused. He originally intended Marxism as the unifying theme in his work. The artist, said Pasolini, 'must apply to his work that critical and conscience-minded

ideology which will enable him to penetrate the reality of his time, interpreting it through the ideology in which he believes. In Italy, at this moment, I maintain that the only possible ideology is the socialist philosophy, Marxism.⁶ This was said in 1961, but by the time he filmed *The Gospel* Marxism had become an insufficient answer. Nevertheless, deliberate traces remain, often appearing as contrived gestures hanging awkwardly on an ideology that is almost out of context, like the father's gesture in *Teorema* or the blinded Oedipus playing to the workers. In his work he probes for the 'truth'. 'Something's always missing, there's a void in all my intuitions . . .' he says in one of the poems in *Poesia in forma di rosa* (Poetry in the form of a rose, 1964), adding 'And it's vulgar . . . this "not having Christ".'

This search for 'truth' is more plausible as the unity that permeates Pasolini's work. It is a truth that can be summed up in the Socratic 'Know thyself.' Pasolini recently said that he eventually hoped to make a film of the life of Socrates and he regarded this as the ultimate in film-making, to be attempted when he has exhausted all the marginal motives that push him to make films. He sees this ultimate in terms of a totally disinterested, completely pure cinema, which achieves a purer relationship with the audience. Although this concept of purity is far from clear in stylistic terms, there is a sense in which Socrates embodies all that Pasolini seems to be striving for. For Socrates self-knowledge was the ultimate goal and this, for him, meant moral goodness, knowledge of good and evil. Throughout his life he verbally fought the material values and arrogant confidence of the Greeks, displaying his belief in his views through his own way of life, caring little for money, position or material comfort, finally dying in prison.

His way of life is closely connected with Pasolini's ideas and hopes, for Pasolini (like Gramsci) sees the intellectual as the saviour of society, the means by which the workers can be educated to self-awareness. The intellectual can escape his bourgeois chains by his humanitarian impulse which leads him to adopt another ideology. In order to do this he must reach a state of self-awareness that enables him to see the nature of good and evil. The characters in *Teorema* achieve a degree of self-awareness that is not present in Pasolini's earlier work (for Oedipus became aware of what he'd done not what he was). But each tries to escape and is doomed to live in a limbo of increasing despair. It is,

apparently, through the Socratic notion of self-knowledge that Pasolini sees the salvation of his characters.

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Ghostly Paradigm and H.C.F. : An Answer to Alan Lovell

'Plato thought nature but a spume that plays upon a ghostly paradigm of things' – W. B. Yeats.

Robin Wood

My first reaction to Alan Lovell's article was to feel greatly honoured at what gave the impression of being a serious and considered study. But the challenge proved less challenging than I had hoped. It is founded on a structure of more or less plausible misrepresentations both of myself and of Dr. Leavis, so that I am forced to spend time sorting these out before I can attack the basic problems. First, distortions of myself, beginning with a relatively minor annoyance and passing rapidly to more fundamental issues.

1. To 'suggest that Billy (in *The Left Handed Gun*) is symbolically blind' would be, not an interpretative assertion, but a grotesque factual blunder, of which I do not believe myself guilty. I'm not clear what Mr. Lovell means here: either he has in mind my suggestion that *Annie's* weak sight is felt symbolically, or he is using the word as a synonym for 'metaphorically'.

2. 'Hawks is presented as being *very close in outlook* (my italics) to those novelists Leavis deals with in "The Great Tradition".' Need I do more than draw attention to this fantastic notion? Can Mr. Lovell tell us where I present Hawks as being 'very close in outlook' to George Eliot or Henry James (two of the three novelists Dr. Leavis's book concentrates on), either explicitly or by implication? Phrases like 'very close in outlook' cease to mean anything as used here. When I read on to discover that I assimilate Hitchcock and Penn to this same mysterious 'outlook', I begin to wonder what Mr. Lovell imagines himself to be talking about. Yet he presents this as quite an important step in his argument.

3. '... *Only Angels Have Wings*, *To Have and Have Not* and *Rio Bravo* go together and are dealt with first because Wood regards them as Hawks's masterpieces. The other chapters move down the scale from the masterpieces to the failures

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(relegated to an appendix).' This is grossly misleading, as to both the structure of my book and my estimate of individual films. Nothing I wrote suggests that I value *To Have and Have Not* (for example) above *Monkey Business*, *Air Force*, *Red River*, or *Red Line 7000* (to take one film from each of the succeeding four chapters). I don't believe Mr. Lovell could take away such an impression from reading the book and therefore assume he didn't read beyond the second chapter. This is borne out by the fact that his references to later sections are concerned only with the chapter headings or are at odds with the actual content (e.g., I explicitly state on page 168 that '*The Big Sleep* is not exactly a failure'). I grouped *Only Angels Have Wings*, *To Have and Have Not* and *Rio Bravo* precisely because they reveal clearly the kind of common pattern or sub-structure Mr. Lovell wants us to look for in a director's work. Its recurrence suggests its importance to Hawks, but *not* that the films in which it is most manifest are necessarily superior to those in which it is submerged or only marginally present.

4. 'The groupings are on the basis of particular resemblances like Self Respect and Responsibility, The Group, The Instinctive Consciousness, and The Lure of Irresponsibility. When examined these terms reveal themselves not simply as descriptive terms but also as evaluative ones. Wood is saying not just that the films express these themes but that the films are good by virtue of so doing.' I think Mr. Lovell would be hard put to it to show where 'Wood is saying' any such self-evident nonsense. I say quite explicitly (of *Red Line 7000*, but no one surely will understand the remark as restricted to that one film), '... one is not claiming any profundity for the extractable moral-metaphysical ideas, which are quite simple and straightforward'. I also try hard to make careful discriminations between various films within the same section (between, for example, *Bringing up Baby* and *Monkey Business*), which Mr. Lovell tends to smudge by suggesting that I claim them to be good because they are about The Lure of Irresponsibility. If he really thinks I say things like that, I can't imagine why he takes me so seriously. I suppose the 'Carry On' films also express The Lure of Irresponsibility. I don't think they are very good 'by virtue of so doing'.

Dr. Leavis has shown himself well-equipped to conduct his own defence against misrepresentation. However, as he comes into Mr. Lovell's essay because of my discipleship, I feel a certain responsibility for the glib and simplistic view

offered of his work. Again I shall start with a relatively minor point, then pass to confusions at the core of Mr. Lovell's attack.

1. 'The great work of art (the only one that Leavis thinks the critic should concern himself with) . . .'. I open my copy of *Revaluation* at random (page 88 of the Peregrine paperback); I find Dr. Leavis quoting a poem by William Whitehead which he says is 'worth study for its representative quality'. On the opposite page he discusses Pope's 'Eloisa to Abelard' in order to show a way in which Pope anticipated Gray; he suggests neither that it is a 'great work of art' nor that Gray was a great artist. I open the book at random again (page 162) and find Dr. Leavis discussing the relationship of Shelley to Wordsworth, quoting from two poems, to neither of which he attributes greatness or *intrinsic* importance. Perhaps Mr. Lovell means that Dr. Leavis tends to concentrate on what seems to him most important?

2. 'The great work of art . . . is great because of its "organic quality"'. Criticism seeks to break down the organic quality of the work in an attempt to understand and evaluate it. The tension set up by this contradiction is never resolved in Leavis.' Surely there is no tension and no contradiction to resolve, except in Mr. Lovell's imagination? A human body is an organism. When the biologist or the anatomist seeks to show how its parts and their functions inter-relate, is he aware of a 'tension' or of a sense of 'contradiction'? To press the analogy would suggest the possibility of some kind of precise critical science which would enable the critic to generalize about works of art; whereas every work of art demands its own individual response. But the analogy holds sufficiently for my immediate purpose. When writing about an 'organic' film like *Rio Bravo*, I seek to demonstrate how the parts (characters, events, attitudes, . . .) inter-relate and express different aspects of a unifying thematic nucleus; in doing so, I am aware of no tension to be resolved (beyond that arising from the difficulty in talking about a *visual* art without recourse to quotation, or from failures of memory). What contradictions am I supposed to feel?

3. There is the question of Dr. Leavis and 'moral values', of which Mr. Lovell makes heavy weather. Apparently 'a basic assumption of Leavisian critical method' is 'that one of the conditions for a work of art to be great is that it should express central moral values'. These turn out to be, more (but not much more) specifically, 'the central values of English

non-conformity as they appeared in the early part of the twentieth century'. Later we have 'the assumption that there are a set of absolute values that all great artists will express even if they work in very different social and cultural contexts'. Dr. Leavis himself has written appreciatively and sensitively on (among others) Donne, Bunyan, Pope, Keats, George Eliot, Hopkins, Mark Twain, T. S. Eliot and D. H. Lawrence. Anyone who sees them as expressing the same 'set of absolute values' must obviously be a raving lunatic, and I suppose Mr. Lovell isn't trying to say that Dr. Leavis is that. Mr. Lovell might state this 'set of absolute values' that Leavisian critics insist all great artists possess. The only kind of *general* criterion I can see as underlying Dr. Leavis's work is necessarily so loose and flexible that Mr. Lovell will find it meaningless: a precondition for great art is that the artist be deeply, sensitively and intelligently involved with life. Perhaps the words 'deeply, sensitively and intelligently' have no clear meaning in an age in which no 'shared, stable system of beliefs and values' exists. It is virtually impossible to define them – there would have to be as many definitions as there are great artists. As soon as one applies them to a specific artist, however, it becomes possible to indicate what one means by them. But the impossibility of rigidly defining such criteria suggests that there is no 'set of absolute values' that Dr. Leavis – or, to come down a great many notches, myself – thinks that all great artists must possess. He does not praise Pope for expressing 'the central values of English non-conformity as they appeared in the early part of the twentieth century'. Criticism is at bottom a *discussion* of values. If the values were all agreed there would be little point in discussing them.

I want to move to a discussion of the rival sets of critical assumptions, via some of the interpretative disputes Mr. Lovell raises. One of these forcibly brings home Mr. Lovell's (or Perry Anderson's) point about the lack of 'a shared, stable system of beliefs and values', and I frankly don't know what to do about this. Mr. Lovell quotes me at some length on *North by Northwest*, and remarks: 'I see no evidence in the film that Hitchcock invites us to make such a judgement of Thornhill' (i.e. that he is 'immature' and 'his life a chaos') 'and Wood quotes none.' Hitchcock presents a man who has got through two marriages, his attitude to which is extremely casual; who, in early middle age, is still dominated by his mother; who drinks heavily; who shows no attachment to other people (mother partly excepted) and

uses them very irresponsibly. This, I think, establishes him as immature. Are 'beliefs and values' so uncertain that there is really no agreement as to what constitutes immaturity? The movement of the film as a whole carries Thornhill (whose initials are R.O.T. – 'O for nothing', as he says) to the point where he is willing to risk his own life to save a woman and preserve his relationship with her. His success in doing these things is presented, I think, as a happy, rather than tragic, outcome. This, for me, is 'evidence', but obviously it can't be for Mr. Lovell.

What do we find when we turn from Mr. Lovell's objections to my critical method to his practice of the one he proposes? In fact, precisely the same kind of interpretative assertions. In *The Chase* 'Bubber's attitudes are those of a pre-adolescent.' How does this differ from my assertions about Thornhill (except in being more open to doubt)? The only guidance we are given to interpreting Bubber's reaction to Anna's adultery with Jake – apart from the context of the whole film, which gives it great moral weight, but isn't the kind of 'evidence' Mr. Lovell will admit – is 'Jail took things like that away from me . . . I'd come to the end of me.'

Again, Thornhill's representative quality as a product of modern city life seems to me evident enough (that he is also carefully individualized as a character does not contradict this). Hitchcock opens the film with shots of anonymous, hurrying crowds out of which Thornhill emerges. Their function *could* be simply to tell us that Thornhill lives in a city or that it is rush hour. Be that as it may, I can see no essential difference between my assertion about Thornhill's representative quality and Mr. Lovell's (in his valuable booklet on Siegel, which accompanied a recent N.F.T. season) about the town in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*: ' . . . since it is so vaguely identified, the town could be representative of anywhere.' I have no difficulty in 'accepting the representative nature of the town, though nothing in the film tells me that it is to be taken as representative. That it is 'so vaguely identified' seems more dubious, and Mr. Lovell says later of the same film, ' . . . society is well defined . . . It appears in the guise of a typical small mid-western town.' This not-so-vague identification does not detract from the town's representative quality, any more than Thornhill's carefully defined character does from his. Mr Lovell's 'critical method' proves in the event as much (or more?) a matter of insufficiently supported assertions as mine: 'In *The Left Handed Gun*, Garrett is linked with the rancher,

'Tunstall' (Where?). '... When Tunstall is murdered, Garrett takes over the father's role, encouraging and guiding him (Billy) in turn. In the light of this I think it would be reasonable to see the subsequent relationship between Billy and Garrett in the Freudian terms suggested by the Billy/Tunstall relationship.' (What 'Freudian terms' are these? The Oedipus complex springs to mind, but surely Billy doesn't want to *kill* Tunstall?) 'Billy's disrupting of the wedding is a son's act of rebellion against his father and it provokes a father's retribution.' Every one of these sentences seems to me to contain, at best, gross over-simplifications of what one sees on the screen. (What has happened, for instance, to the clearly established connection – via the Bible – of Tunstall with Billy's *mother*?) The sudden lapse of confidence in the middle ('I think it would be reasonable . . .') is rather a giveaway.

At school, I remember doing exercises that involved finding the Highest Common Factor of a series of numbers. Mr. Lovell is proposing, essentially, that we apply this principle to the cinema. Question: Find the H.C.F. of the films of Arthur Penn. Answer: unsocialized adolescent versus father-figure. As in Mathematics, it has its uses. Mr. Lovell, however, seems a bit uncertain as to its status: he calls it variously a 'tool', part of an 'apparatus', and a 'critical method'. He is explicitly modest and tentative about it at the end of his article, but this is at odds with the tone of his use of it in what he calls his 'account' of Penn. Those who have read Mr. Peter Wollen's interesting and intelligent book *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema* will observe a certain family resemblance between this 'account' and Mr. Wollen's accounts of Ford and Hawks in the chapter on the *Auteur* Theory (though the comparison does Mr. Wollen less than justice). Here again the procedure seems to acquire the status of 'critical method'. Let us be clear about this: it is a tool, no more, to be taken up and laid aside at will. To magnify it into a 'critical method' can only do harm. Mr. Wollen's strategy is more sophisticated than the Highest Common Factor process. He erects a 'ghostly paradigm' of the director's films, a kind of Ideal Film existing in some Platonic never-never land, and judges from it the director's significance. It also enables him to evaluate individual films according to how far they contribute to it or approximate to it (a procedure whereby *Wings of Eagles* emerges as a major work in Ford's output). This 'film' is 'in reality' (which is a curious phrase in this context), via Lévi-Strauss, 'a kind of permuta-

tion group, the two variants placed at the far ends being in a symmetrical, though inverted, relationship to each other'. The principle is also used to evaluate directors relative to each other. The 'ghostly paradigm' of Ford is confronted with that of Hawks, and Hawks's is found wanting: he 'is simply an undoubted *auteur*', whereas Ford is a 'great artist' because of the 'richness of the shifting relations between antinomies' in his work. But all the body has evaporated in the process. Art exists only in the flesh of the achieved work. Hawks is a great director because he made *Rio Bravo*, and Ford because he made *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*. Of course, one must take into account the whole *oeuvre*, and, of course, individual films within it will throw light on each other. But an *oeuvre* consists of individual films, more or less completely achieved. The artist's achievement is something tangibly *there*, in his fully realized works. The importance of *Wings of Eagles* is increased not a jot by the discovery of its contribution to the Ford paradigm. If Mr. Wollen wants to convince us of its value, I can see no way in which he can do this without offering a detailed analysis of how the film works as a self-sufficient entity. On the other hand the greatness of *Rio Bravo* is in no way diminished by any limitations discernible in the Hawks paradigm.

It is when the tool is used for evaluative purposes that its dangers become most obvious: the dangers of over-simplification inherent in *any* attempt to turn criticism into a science. Mr. Lovell is decently tentative here ('a case could be made'), but presumably he means his remarks about *Bonnie and Clyde* to be taken seriously as a specimen of the tool's evaluative prowess. It is (perhaps) 'one of Penn's less successful films on the ground that the shift in Hamer's position in the drama makes the film simpler than the previous films and less coherent'. So all the marvellous local life – the sense of creative spontaneity, the flexibility and detailed vividness of the characterization, the tensions within and between the members of the gang, the complex interaction of values in, say, the Eugene-and-Velma sequence – everything that indicates I am in the presence of a probable masterpiece – counts for little or nothing beside the fact that the film doesn't quite fit Mr. Lovell's paradigm (though 'formula' here might be the more accurate word).

Again, the tendency to over-simplification is evident in Mr. Lovell's offers of interpretation. That Annie Sullivan (in *The Miracle Worker*) has something of the function of a father-figure is obvious, and by exerting discipline she prepares

Helen for a role in society. This gives her function in the film certain affinities with those of Pat Garrett in *The Left Handed Gun* and Calder in *The Chase*. This is an interesting insight, and one is grateful to Mr. Lovell for it. But to *reduce* Annie to that! Calder and Garrett are both presented as highly conscious men who (until broken down by events) reflect before they act. Already one becomes aware of crucial differences between the films that Mr. Lovell's 'account' doesn't begin to account for: Garrett's awareness enables him to be integrated in his society, whereas Calder's sets him quite apart from *his*. Annie is unlike either of them: though she is not without conscious insight, her reactions are presented consistently as immediate and instinctive. Her physical battle to make Helen use a spoon is not the response of a woman who stands back and takes account of the issues (as Calder does, for most of *The Chase*): it is obviously not the only, or necessarily the best, way to exert discipline. In her usurping of the role of God ('I mean her to', she says, in response to Captain Keller's suggestion that 'God may not have meant Helen to have eyes'), Annie is very like Billy ('I'm the law'). The last images of the film show Helen accepting Annie as a *mother*. Such complexities are the life of the film: Mr. Lovell's 'critical method' sweeps them all aside to make the film fit the formula.

The sort of valuable function that Mr. Lovell's 'structural analysis' can have is best illustrated, I think, by his booklet on Siegel. His exposition of the underlying structure of Siegel's films (though I understand that some who know Siegel's work better than I do would question parts of it) is admirably clear yet complex – it avoids the simplistic pitfalls of his account of Penn (the shortcomings of which one would attribute to shortage of space were it not for the confident way in which it is offered). It is an admirable *introduction*, providing a useful map or blueprint from which one could explore Siegel's work. Yet it stops short where criticism begins. It will explain to anyone the thematic structure of Siegel's work; it will not, I think, convince anyone of the work's value, or even supply the kind of basis on which its value could be discussed. The essential critical work on Siegel remains to be done. The paper perfectly fulfils its function (one never wants to thrust value-judgements at people who haven't yet seen the work in question). Yet the structural analysis method makes it easy to evade important questions about the intrinsic value of individual films. A radical objection to *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, for example,

arises when one asks the question: What, in terms of quality, are the 'emotion' and the 'cultural aspirations' (Siegel's own terms) that the film can offer as alternative to the 'pods'? – and gets, as far as I can see, no answer. Such objections would be out of place in Mr. Lovell's paper, yet one senses that a structural analysis could continue to side-step them indefinitely.

D. H. Lawrence offers what seems to me to be a classic statement of the critic's position and function, at the beginning of his essay on Galsworthy.

'Literary criticism can be no more than a reasoned account of the feeling produced upon the critic by the book he is criticizing. Criticism can never be a science: it is, in the first place, much too personal, and in the second, it is concerned with values that science ignores. The touchstone is emotion, not reason. We judge a work of art by its effect on our sincere and vital emotion, and nothing else. All the critical twiddle-twaddle about style and form, all this pseudo-scientific classifying and analysing of books in an imitation-botanical fashion, is mere impertinence and mostly dull jargon.

A critic must be able to *feel* the impact of a work of art in all its complexity and its force. To do so, he must be a man of force and complexity himself, which few critics are. A man with a paltry, impudent nature will never write anything but paltry, impudent criticism. And a man who is *emotionally* educated is rare as a phoenix . . .

More than this, even an artistically and emotionally educated man must be a man of good faith. He must have the courage to admit what he feels, as well as the flexibility to *know* what he feels . . . A critic must be emotionally alive in every fibre, intellectually capable and skilful in essential logic, and then morally honest.

Then it seems to me a good critic should give his reader a few standards to go by. He can change the standards for every new critical attempt, so long as he keeps good faith . . .

I would make certain modifications to Lawrence's statements, partly because a critic of so much less 'force and complexity' than Lawrence feels a corresponding need for more systematized supports for his direct emotional contact with the work in question. One knows the sort of thing Lawrence means by 'All the critical twiddle-twaddle about

style and form', but shouldn't be swept into assuming that discussions of style and form that preserve strict relevance to the essential nature of the work are invalid. The basis of real criticism seems admirably formulated by Lawrence: 'A critic must be able to *feel* the impact of a work of art in all its complexity and force.' That, it seems to me, is where we must start from. The trouble is quite simple: so far, there are no film critics. There are hundreds of 'paltry, impudent natures' producing 'paltry, impudent criticism': the daily papers and the weeklies are mostly in their hands. And there are a few people like Mr. Lovell and myself (I hope he won't resent the juxtaposition) who are at least trying to be serious and honest. But there is so far no Dr. Leavis, no A. P. Rossiter, of film criticism. Many of the best literary critics – Dr. Johnson, Henry James, D. H. Lawrence – have also been practitioners, and here again, apart from the early days of *Cahiers du Cinéma*, and perhaps the Chabrol-Rohmer book on Hitchcock, the cinema has not yet produced any equivalent. I think writers on cinema can learn more from reading Dr. Leavis – or A. P. Rossiter's great book on Shakespeare, *Angel with Horns* – than from reading other film critics: obviously, they will learn nothing about practical techniques for criticizing *film*, but they will be helped in their attempts to define for themselves what is important.

Perhaps I may be allowed to pass to a personal account of my 'method' (though I have never thought of it as that). Mr. Lovell's impression of how I write is in fact inaccurate. I had read very little on Hawks before I undertook my book, and read nothing while working on it, trying to clear my head of anything I *had* read. Discussions with friends and colleagues were minimal, though one of my school students argued with me about Hawks, and some of the reservations I express derive from this. One other exception: Mr. Peter Wollen taught me to understand *El Dorado*, and I regard the chapter on it as belonging as much to him as to me. I had read nothing on Penn except an article in *Movie* by Paul Mayersberg, which I couldn't remember and was careful not to re-read. My aim has been to write always from my own personal contact with the films. I have no ambitions to write the 'definitive' work on this or that director: only to be definitive as far as my own feelings about him are concerned. In criticism there can be no clear borderline between subjective and objective. One writes every time a sort of personal testament out of one's sense of vital contact with a director's work,

one's sympathy and recoil: this is what these films mean to *me*. At the same time one tries to respond to the films *as they are*, avoiding temptations to produce one's own versions and talk about *them*. I get the impression that Mr. Lovell thinks a critic should only write down what other people will be forced to acknowledge as the truth. The 'assertions' to which he objects are always (I think) supported by reasoned argument, but by their nature they can't be *proven*. A critic who restricted himself to that kind of truth (even if this were possible and it isn't, as Mr. Lovell's own assertions demonstrate) would be crippling himself. A critic can only write with a deep sense of responsibility towards his readers, towards art, and towards his own feeling of what matters, but his truth will still be about his own emotional responses. It follows that this truth must always be provisional, subject to continual questioning both by himself and by others.

Take my comparison of *Rio Bravo* and *High Noon*, quoted by Mr. Lovell. It is, as he says, 'a mixture of abuse and assertion'. Yet it seems to me that both the abuse and the assertions are discussible. I *do* share a common experience with readers who have seen *High Noon* – we have watched the same images and heard the same sounds. The context will make it clear that by appealing to 'common experience' I meant no more than that. There still exists a shared basis of assumptions for discussion to be practicable. If our culture has reached a stage of disintegration where the word 'cliché' (for example) no longer carries any widely accepted meaning, such as could offer a basis for discussion of particular cases, then the critic's task is impossible. With film, the problem *is* one of quotation, whatever Mr. Lovell may say, and there is no way of evading it. One cannot talk about a film meaningfully without finding some way of discussing the actual life of the film, which is in the movement of images and sounds. What sort of answer could be made by someone who wished to defend *High Noon*? He could either seek to demonstrate that I have 'misread' the film, or he could agree with my description of it, but argue that my estimate doesn't necessarily follow. In the former case, he is up against more detailed 'assertions' than Mr. Lovell quotes, for he leaves out all my specific examples. I chose these deliberately from scenes contained in the B.F.I. extract, which is readily accessible to teachers and lecturers and could, therefore, be used as a basis for discussion. Have we not a sufficient background of accepted values for people to be able to discuss whether or not the church scene or the Grace Kelly/Katy Jurado

exchange operate exclusively on the level of untranscended cliché (in dialogue, acting, editing, camera positioning, etc.)? Is it not possible (in theory at least, for I think in practice the sequences in question will be found indefensible) that our hypothetical defender of *High Noon* could offer an analysis of these scenes that would demonstrate their creative vitality? The latter alternative – with the film's defender in agreement with my description but not my judgement – would involve a case being made out for attaching importance to morally acceptable points irrespective of the manner in which they are realized: a blurring of the distinctions between art and propaganda. It could hardly arise among adults with a mature conception of what art is, but might arise, say, in school, and could lead to a profitable discussion of fundamentals.

Of course, it is most unlikely that the sort of discussion I envisage would end with everyone in perfect agreement; but it is equally unlikely that opinions will not have been modified and perceptions sharpened. I can give an example of something very like this happening from my personal experience, the more relevant here in that Mr. Lovell was involved in the experience too. On a B.F.I. summer course I attended as a student about eight years ago, there was a discussion of Ford centred upon an extract from *My Darling Clementine*. Ford and I had always been temperamentally incompatible; until that time I had not been greatly interested in his work and had tended to belittle it. I don't believe that I capitulated at once: the undermining of prejudices – human nature being what it is – takes time, and one will find one has accepted a judgement six months later that one rejected at the time. But the essential work was done for me at that session, in which Mr. Lovell and certain of his colleagues from the Education Department participated, and which was based not on any structural analysis, but on assertions (irrefutable, I now think) about the quality of Ford's images and their meaning, within the framework of a fifteen-minute extract. I date my admiration for Ford from that hour, when his work first came alive for me. Since then Mr. Wollen's structural analysis has greatly increased my overall grasp of Ford, but has not radically affected my estimate of his value. The sort of critical give-and-take I have in mind as the ideal is well defined in Dr. Leavis's dictum about critical exchange, which Mr. Lovell inadvertently parodies in his article when he writes: "‘This is so, isn't it?’" is the question that criticism should provoke in this view.'

Surely a very odd question for a critic to wish to provoke? The original of which I take this to be a characteristically garbled version suggests that the *critic* proposes 'This is so, isn't it?' in order to provoke the response 'Yes, but'

The structural analysis that sets out to discover the Highest Common Factor of Penn (Mr. Lovell) or the paradigm of Hawks or Ford (Mr. Wollen) can tell us little of the intrinsic *value* of these directors. What is revealed will be of its nature very basic and probably very banal. The kind of underlying structure Mr. Wollen discovers in Ford, for example, has no particular value, no great significance, in itself. In proffering it, it seems to me, Mr. Wollen takes Ford's intrinsic value for granted. The emerging paradigm could as well be used to argue a case *against* Ford, laying bare the crude and platitudinous nature of his 'thought'. My point is that Ford would be unscathed by any such hypothetical attack: the artist is never to be equated with the ideas that can be abstracted from his work. The value of Ford's art lies in the way his emotional commitments are realized in the movement of sounds and images on the screen. Structural analysis is useful in so far as it helps to throw light on the uneven quality of this realization, on the successes and the failures and what determines them.

Mr. Lovell (but not Mr. Wollen) will protest at this point that he is explicitly not concerned (yet, at any rate) with questions of value. I think he must be. A sense of value is inherent in the critic's response from the outset. Without it, how could we possibly decide which directors to apply a structural analysis *to*? Mr. Lovell can't convince me that he decided to explore Siegel by sticking a pin blindfold in a directory of directors. Mr. Wollen seems rather more inclusive in his possible interests, suggesting that we apply the *Auteur* theory – apparently indiscriminately – to the British cinema, 'which is still utterly amorphous, unclassified, unperceived'. Do we simply grit our teeth and plunge in, shuddering, to undertake structural analyses of Basil Dearden, Ralph Thomas, Guy Hamilton and the Boulting Brothers?

Perhaps Mr. Wollen doesn't quite mean this, but it is not at all clear what he *does* mean. The kind of exhaustive pseudo-scientific classifying he seems to want us poor critics (who already have too many films to see, too many books to read, too much music to listen to, etc.) to undertake associates quite naturally with his desire to see 'not two or three books on Hitchcock and Ford, but many many, more'

When one contemplates, for comparison, the literary criticism industry – the proliferation of works on Lawrence and Yeats, for example, and the very small proportion of these of which the value justifies the existence – one's heart sinks at Mr. Wollen's enthusiasm.

What first attracted me to *Hawks* were certain qualities in *Rio Bravo* to which I felt a very strong response: the warmth, affection and respect the characters showed for each other, and which seemed to reflect that felt for them by the director; the quite unsentimental strength of the Wayne/Martin relationship, one of the most moving depictions of friendship in the cinema; the way in which, through a series of beautifully developed serio-comic scenes, Wayne is gradually weaned from the all-male circle to the full relationship with a woman. These are all features that transcend the Wollen paradigm, and are left quite out of account by it; I suspect that they would also be left out of account by Mr. Lovell's structural analysis which 'would begin with the notion of the group . . .' etc. Criticism must begin and end with a sense of value, whatever comes in between. If the purpose of criticism is not a discussion of values, then I don't see what it is. To indicate briefly what I mean by 'values', let me quote from Dr. Leavis's follow-up¹ to one of the essential documents of our time, the answer to C. P. Snow²: '... I don't believe in any "literary values", and you won't find me talking about them; the judgements the literary critic is concerned with are judgements about life.'

REFERENCES

1. 'Lectures in America', page 23.
2. 'Two Cultures?'

Film Education and Film Culture

Paddy Whannel

THE CONTENT OF FILM EDUCATION

Two sets of problems confront anyone engaged in Film Study. There are the practical difficulties, which include the lack of documentation, limited training facilities and the problems of film availability and costs. Alongside the practical problems, there is the theoretical issue of defining the content of the subject and reaching some agreement about its methods of study.

If, in recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis in this survey on the theoretical issue, this is not because I underestimate the importance of the practical problems or would wish solutions to be pursued with any less energy, but because it is becoming increasingly obvious that the growth of the movement as a whole is dependent on making headway with defining more accurately the content and aims of film study as a subject. It is only in the context of such progress that some of the practical problems can be solved.

To take a very simple example, decision makers in education (headmasters, principals, education officers, etc.) will only make provision for film study courses if they have a clear understanding of what the subject is and why it is relevant and important. It is still true that in most quarters this understanding does not exist. That it doesn't cannot be put down to academic conservatism alone. The fact that there is no agreed term to describe the subject, no equivalent of the term 'literature', for example, is the most obvious indication of the difficulty. All of us shift uneasily between such descriptions as Film Education, with the danger of confusing the subject with audio-visual aids, and the clumsy Screen Education, implying the uncertain and dubious inclusion of television. At times, for the sake of clarity, we are even driven to return to the old fashioned term, Film Appreciation, with all its limiting connotations.

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It would be misleading to strike an unduly pessimistic note. The film-teaching movement, sustained by a more general interest in the cinema, especially among the student population, has certainly flourished in recent years. Most encouraging of all, perhaps, is the fact that the pioneering three-year main course in Film at Bede College of Education, Durham, has now been joined by a similar course at Bulmershe College of Education, Reading. There are signs that courses at other colleges are on their way. The bulk of the work, however, is still carried on within other subject disciplines including English, Drama and Social Studies, and, within universities, in such departments as French, Italian and North American Studies. The picture is very confusing with an overlap between different types of film and different uses, ranging from film as art, film as stimulus, film as document, right through to the more strictly instrumental uses of film. In addition, the nature of the work often depends as much on the knowledge and commitment of the teacher as it does on the formal description in the time-table.

There is some virtue to be found in this fragmented development. At this stage the widest variety of experiment is desirable and, certainly, every encouragement should be given to those who wish to use feature and other imaginative film material in whatever subject. Realistically, also, this is how film will enter, and is entering, education at all levels, especially in the present economic climate. But the dangers are equally obvious. Film will not establish itself as a discipline in its own right, with its own body of knowledge and expertise, if its use in education is confined to being a secondary element within some other course. The danger is illustrated by the number of text books on Mass Media Studies now available, which offer a sketchy introduction to the cinema over a handful of pages in the context of chapters on such traditional Leavisite concerns as advertising, newspapers and popular magazines and, in some cases, adding the further confusion of sections on topics like the development of printing and telephonic communications. There is also the strong tendency in that blurred world between English and Social Studies, where issues of personal and public morality are handled, to see film exclusively as a vehicle for illustrating such issues.

We need to make two claims. We have to argue first of all for the *idea* of the study of film as art and entertainment as a distinct discipline having its own particular problems. Secondly, we need to establish centres at all levels in educa-

tion, but especially within higher education, where such a study can take place. The general case for Film Study is best put in these terms: the cinema is a significant feature of contemporary culture representing the most developed and distinctive form of art produced by technology with the unique feature that its growth, from its most primitive beginnings, is preserved for study on celluloid. Other secondary arguments, such as those in the Newsom Report which make special reference to young people, can be brought to bear, but it is important to recognize that they are secondary. One such is the argument that the quality of the varied uses of film now in existence is dependent on the development of the study of film in its own right. The teacher of, say, Social Studies using pieces of poetry, sections of novels and plays, and so on is drawing upon a rich and established literature culture. Unless an equivalent film culture is developed the uses of film will remain partial and thin.

There are plenty of signs now of such a culture emerging, but there are two features of the contemporary situation which, with qualifications, impede its development. The first of these is the growth of educational technology. There are, of course, positive features of this growth which I want to refer to later, but, by encompassing film within a complex which includes closed circuit television and language laboratories, it further complicates the problem of definition. Large sums of money are being invested, supported by powerful commercial interests, which go to create an establishment which emphasizes the *means* of communication over their use, or puts its prime stress on the instrumental capacities of the media rather than on their imaginative or expressive qualities. At present, there is no Inspector at the Department of Education and Science, and no Organizers at county level, in the subject of Film Study. As a consequence, when decisions are called for concerning film study they quite frequently have to be made by people already overwhelmed by the problems of educational technology and who, through no fault of their own, are not especially familiar with the notion itself. A rather similar situation exists within the educational press.

The second feature that must cause some concern is the impact made by Marshall McLuhan. This is not the place to go into a general argument about McLuhan's ideas but, as I understand it, his basic proposition is that the growth of new means of communication has important social and psychological effects independent of their use. Put in the extreme

form which McLuhan likes (i.e. the medium is the message) it clearly makes film study meaningless. In its less extreme form, it is an important idea, although not entirely original. But, if we look for an explanation of the astonishing success that McLuhan has had, we have to go beyond the quality of his thought. His ideas sustain and are sustained by strong economic and political forces. As Raymond Williams has pointed out, he has been taken up by the world of advertising, because the talented people who work in that industry have for long felt guilty about using all the sophisticated devices of modern communications for trivial ends and are, therefore, delighted to be told by a professor that content doesn't matter. McLuhan's ideas have a somewhat similar relationship to educational technology, and it is here and in the world of the media controllers and P.R. men, rather than in the academic world, that he has made his impact.

It is disturbing, therefore, to note the uncritical acceptance of McLuhan by some film teachers, as it is distressing to note his effect on language, which makes sensible men gathered together to discuss the practical problems of film study sound as if they were medieval philosophers.

In trying to define what might be involved in the academic study of film, the most useful parallel has always seemed to be with literature. Film, like literature, has its different forms and genres, its authors and its texts. The parallel has the merit of simplicity, of making clear, especially to those outside the film-teaching movement, the distinction between film as aid and the study of film as art. The central importance of studying the work of the cinema's great directors can be readily understood as the equivalent of the study of important novelists and dramatists. The parallel also makes clear the distinction between film, which has a history, a certain formal coherence and an emerging scholarship, and television which has none of these things, or at the best has them in a very rudimentary form.

But while the parallel with literature has its uses, it also evokes the charge of being 'purist' or 'elitist' or being 'too narrow'. One can see why this should be so. The advocate of film study is faced with the dilemma of advancing its claims as one of the humanities at a time when the humanities are in crisis. The literary culture, so long at the centre of our educational and political systems, is being challenged on all sides. There is the major challenge from outside of the scientific culture. Also, within the arts there are develop-

ments, especially in the fields of music and the visual arts, which, in enlisting the aid of technology and being open to a high degree of cross fertilization between popular and avant-garde forms, undermine the old literary-based distinctions between highbrow, middlebrow and lowbrow. Even within education, the assumptions made about the humanizing role of literature are under pressure. By and large, the literary culture, with its emphasis on good taste and a refined personal sensibility, *is* narrow. Nothing could be less desirable than to impose such a straitjacket on the cinema which is, after all, not only an art, but also an industry and a form of mass entertainment. The problem is, therefore, to define the content of film study sufficiently rigorously to give it coherence without suffocating it by too narrow a framework.

We should also be able to define it as a subject independent of how it might be taught and what teaching strategies might be used for different age-groups. The following rough sketch of a possible framework I put forward very tentatively in the hope that it might provoke discussion.

1. *Criticism*

It would still seem sensible to regard the illumination of particular texts as the controlling element, so that criticism would be at the centre of the study, although this does not mean that the bulk of the time should be devoted to it. The emphasis should be on description and elucidation rather than on evaluation and the level of *information* should be high. There is a need to develop systematic approaches and to find more objective bases for critical analysis than personal taste and sensibility. At present the various ideas clustered round the notions of author and genre would seem to present the most useful starting points.

2. *Theory*

This is a sparsely documented field. There is a need to re-examine and carry further where possible such existing theories as the traditional film grammar approach. Much must be derived from other fields such as the work in aesthetics and more specialized studies like semiology¹ and communications theory.

3. *Contextual Studies*

Assuming the core of the work is the study of particular directors this must then be related to the context within which a director works and which conditions his work.

Areas to be covered here include the structure of the industry, the production system, the entertainment forms available and the critical climate. Here again the aid of other subject disciplines, such as sociology and economic history, must be sought.

A practical example might help to give substance to this brief outline. A study of the work of John Ford could include, among other things, an examination of his characteristic themes, of their roots in American political life and of his handling of them in terms of his visual and dramatic style. Such a study would take into account the changes in Ford's work over his long career, his growth and development as an artist, which could be pointed by reference to his relationship with particular actors like Fonda, Wayne and Stewart. Consideration would have to be given as well to how far there is a consistency in his work spreading over all the different genres he has worked in. This in turn would lead logically to a study of the Western, the genre through which Ford's vision seems to have found its most satisfying expression. This would involve us in a study of the emergence of the form, not only in the cinema, but also in novels and stage melodrama. An attempt to describe its defining elements would lead us to look at the work of other directors within it, to note the changes it has undergone, both as a result of its own internal development and of the wider movements in taste and fashion. Among things to be considered would be the expectations of the audience, the demands of the studio production system, and the director's response to both these elements.

A programme of work such as this, centred on the study of a particular artist, would not only throw light on that individual's work, but would also enable us to say a number of things about wider issues as well. In this case, it could help to clarify the way we use such terms as 'myth' and 'genre' and to refine our ideas about the relationship of an artist to his audience and to a commercial system, to say something about the notion of effects and the role of the individual creator, in an art based on technology and the division of labour. In short, it would be a contribution to an important aspect of cultural history, to the sociological study of the media and the debate about mass culture, as well as being an appreciation of a man and his work.

The impulse to define the content of film study, to limit it and draw its boundaries to give it some governing centre,

does not come from a desire to isolate it from other concerns, nor does it reduce it to a narrow and refined conception of discrimination. On the contrary, it is only through limiting his area of inquiry and by pursuing it at some depth, that the student of film can make a contribution to the wider problems of culture and communications.

THE METHODS OF FILM EDUCATION

It was argued in last year's Report that many of the problems facing the film teacher arise from the fact that, in contrast to most (all?) other subjects, film has emerged in the schools before it has become an established academic discipline. There is, therefore, a strain on the teacher who must in the process of his teaching be making an original contribution to the content of his subject and its methodology.

In the early 'film appreciation' stages of the movement the work was based on the 'film grammar' approach derived from the writings of such pioneers in the field as Ernest Lindgren and Roger Manvell. This was undermined from two sources. First, from developments within the cinema itself with the emergence of different film styles and a re-evaluation of film history, which revealed a tradition of film-making which did not fit into the film grammar approach, with its predominant stress on editing, and which made the parallel drawn between the film and the written language (a shot is a word, a scene is a sentence and so on) seem too simplistic. More important, however, were developments within education itself. The film grammar approach was most radically undermined by the reaction against grammar within the teaching of English. The stress on discussion rather than on instruction, on the importance of content over formal rules, has opened up an area of work in the schools and colleges which unites English and Social Studies. It is within this framework that film has made most headway and the characteristic course uses the theme as an organizing principle rather than some formal concept like grammar. If a critical method is evident it is usually Leavisite which keys in with the importance attached to the discussion of values. This work has been forwarded by some of the best teachers in the field and it is free from the limitations of the film grammar courses, which tended always to be insulated from experience. On the other hand, the constant insistence on discussion and on the probing of values, the relative absence of a defined body of knowledge and the lack of a systematic

critical procedure, all lead to difficulties of their own which can place some strain on both pupil and teacher. If we add to these difficulties the problem of deciding whether it is the theme or the character of the film which should control and define a discussion, we have a situation which can be rather daunting, especially for the teacher coming fresh to film study.

Two things would seem to be required. The first is the need not only for further full descriptions of this work, but also some attempt at an analysis of it, especially to see if one can tease out from the experience a systematic teaching method which could be learned. Here the Humanities Curriculum Project is of key importance because the Project exists not only to provide thematic materials for experiment, but also to evaluate the results. Its conclusions will be of the greatest importance to the film-teaching movement. Secondly, we need to encourage a greater variety of courses based on some formal principle drawn from the study of a film as art, and to evaluate these. Clearly such critical developments as the *Auteur* theory have important implications for film teaching, for the way a course is organized, for the use of extracts and features, etc., which should be tested in practice. The growth of film courses within C.S.E. may encourage this by demanding a more careful definition of aims and, to that extent, may be welcomed.

Research and experiment in teaching method must go hand in hand with the attempt to define the content of film study and the nature of film art. There is as much solid work to be done in the former as in the latter. If the film-teaching movement has suffered in the past from being too isolated from criticism, it has also been too isolated from developments within education. There is much to be gained from the experience of other subject specialists and useful lessons could be drawn from a study of how other disciplines found a place (or in some cases did not find a place) within the educational system. One fundamental question which can only be mentioned in passing here illustrates this. What is the role of practical and creative work in film study? This raises questions not only about the function of such work within a subject conceived as a liberal study, about its relationship to the critical and historical treatment of the subject, but also about the kind of institutions appropriate for film study within higher education. Part of the answer will be found in developing and evaluating the work in the experimental use of audio-visual equipment pioneered by

teachers like Douglas Lowndes at Hornsey and Albert Hunt at Bradford. It is notable, for example, that this work has developed alongside the growth of thematic teaching and parallels the shift from the production of the set play to forms of improvised drama within English. It would be interesting, therefore, to consider what forms of practical work would be appropriate to courses that were based neither on themes nor on film grammar. But there is then the question of the relationship of film study as it emerges as a university discipline to the schools, such as the Royal College of Art, offering professional film training. If and when a National Film School is established this issue will be sharpened. Would such a school be the appropriate centre for producing critics, scholars and potential film teachers? This was not envisaged by the Lloyd Committee and none of the existing schools regard this as their function, although some provision is usually made for the study of film criticism and history. Is the drift, therefore, towards a School or Schools offering professional training with the scholarly work taking place inside the university? What then would be the place of practical film-making within a university department? To answer such questions involves us not only in examining the work as it emerges in this country, but also in looking at institutions abroad, such as the large schools in Eastern Europe, the Film Department at U.C.L.A. in America and smaller schools such as the Swedish Film Institute. But more than that, for the division between scholar and practitioner goes deep within the educational system, so that it becomes relevant to look at, for example, the growth of art education with its classic distinction between the departments of fine arts, which aim to produce art historians and critics, and the schools of art which exist to produce artists.

THE PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

These are familiar enough, but if solutions in most cases are easy to propose they are less easy to realize in practice. As far as provision for study is concerned, the establishment of the two-year Diploma Course at the Film Department of the Slade College of Fine Art, University College, London, is a most important development and it is to be hoped that this will be the forerunner of similar provision elsewhere.

The aspiring teacher is now well served by the courses at Bede and Bulmershe, but the practising teacher has still to

rely on short courses (such as the one-term courses at Bede and Hornsey) or on what provision might exist for part-time study in his own area.

The lack of documentation is still critical. A recent seminar paper by a colleague on the British Cinema had to begin by pointing out that there is no adequate history of the British Cinema, no critical accounts of its directors and no studies of its major institutions, such as the Rank Organization. The problem, of course, is circular because the production of such documentation is to a large degree dependent on making provision for full-time study.

The problems of film availability and costs have been outlined elsewhere² but there is one aspect which I would like to underline. The development of new techniques of multiple reproduction, the most important of which would seem to be E.V.R., are of the greatest significance not only for film study, but also for the cinema itself. In theory at any rate, we face the possibility that it will soon be possible to have in the school (and in the home) a library of feature films acquired at quite modest cost and projectable in the simplest way through a normal television set. Leaving aside what this might mean for the future of the cinema as an institution, and such allied questions as the importance of picture quality and the conditioning effect of seeing a film with an audience in a cinema, this could clearly revolutionize the situation for teachers of film. Considerable obstacles concerning copyright, etc., are in the way and it may be that the initial development, by placing heavy reliance on didactic material for use in education, will actually impede film study. It is clear, however, that these developments should be given urgent scrutiny from the film teaching standpoint and that distributors of films relevant to film study should be encouraged to realize their potential.

EDUCATION AS AN AGENCY OF FILM CULTURE

Film education despite its many problems and its youth is in a dynamic state. It also has a key role to play by providing the institutionalized channel whereby the burgeoning interest in film, as evidenced by the readiness of publishers to invest in film books and the number of student film magazines and festivals, can be translated into a film culture.

Education, of course, is only one of a number of agencies for creating a film culture. Other agencies include the centres of

documentation, such as that housed within the British Film Institute, the National Film Archive, the critical magazines, the agencies for showing films including both the 'commercial' and 'art' cinemas, the National Film Theatre with its regional branches, the television companies and the film society movement and, above all else, those who make films. It is important that film study does not develop in isolation inside a kind of academic ghetto and that it has an active relationship with these other agencies. It is regrettable that the critical magazines show little interest in film education. It must be one of the functions of *Screen* to bridge that gap as well as exploring in a more considered way the kind of issues touched upon in this survey.

The idea of agency is more dynamic than a concept like museum. The idea of film culture is wider than the notion of film art. The point, therefore, in using the term Agencies of Film Culture is to imply an alliance of artist, critic and teacher in an activist programme.

Note. This article is a slightly edited version of the first part of the B.F.I. Education Department's Report for 1968/69. The second part carries information about the Department's work and services, such as the provision of lectures and courses, the making available of film extracts and other study material, the publication of documents and books about film and film teaching, and the operation of an advisory service. The full Report is sent to all those on the Department's mailing list. Copies can also be obtained by writing to the Education Officer, British Film Institute, 81 Dean Street, London, W1V 6AA.

REFERENCES

¹ See Peter Wollen's book, *Signs & Meaning in the Cinema* (Secker & Warburg, 1969).

² *Screen*, Vol. 10. No. 1.

Mickey One

Michael Walker

The complete artistic freedom which Penn gained to make *Mickey One* did not prove to be such an asset as one would have hoped. Although it enabled him to develop his brilliant visual style, it also resulted in a film which, at its worst, seems to be overloaded with symbols and 'significance' – the sort of film that is labelled pretentious. Yet such a conscious attempt by an American director to make an 'intellectual/art film' can be dismissed all too easily for its pretensions, thereby saving the critic the trouble of examining it with the attention he would give were it a European film. The 'allegorical, Kafkaesque' structure of the film does seem obscure at first sight, but no more so than the structure of, say, *8½* – to take a film which has influenced Penn. In Great Britain, *Mickey One* has been written off with much the same superficiality as had been applied to Welles's version of Kafka's *The Trial*, two years earlier. In America a few voices have spoken up strongly for the film. Albert Johnson, whilst recognizing that it was not flawless, called it 'a major contribution to the *art* of film making in this country'.¹ Certainly it is a very ambitious film. I want to consider the extent to which its ambitions are successfully realized.

In an interview,² Penn has told us something of his ambitions in making the film: 'This youth who flees from an anonymous and deadly threat symbolizes the paranoia which has haunted the U.S.A. . . . ever since it was realized that it had lost the monopoly of nuclear weapons. This . . . nuclear terror led to the establishment of other terrors, notably McCarthyism . . .' If we can accept the atmosphere of paranoia that Penn creates in *Mickey One* as a valid comment on contemporary U.S.A., then, on one level at least, the film becomes immediately meaningful. Penn achieves this atmosphere primarily through the character of his hero, an unnamed night-club comedian who is pursued constantly by

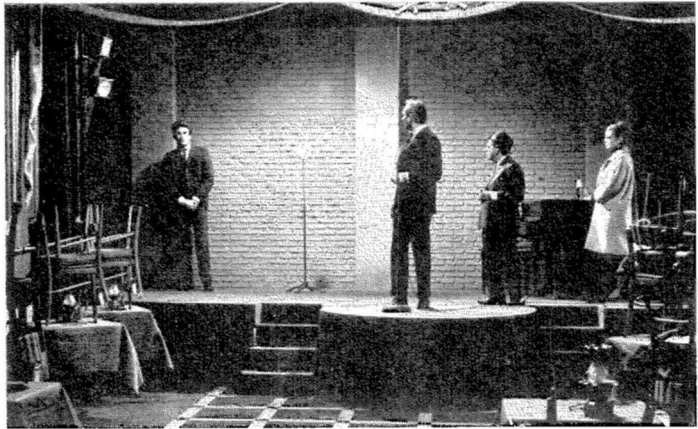
the fear that an unspecified 'they' (the Mafia?) will catch up with him and exact payment for a debt he is convinced that he owes. (During his flight he acquires the name Mickey One through stealing some identification papers – the surname on these papers proves unpronounceable and is shortened to One.) His fears may be exaggerated, but they are not groundless, as we shall see later. He is a particular case chosen by Penn to express, in an acute form, fears which he feels to exist in American society.

Mickey One was not the first American film of recent years to contain strong paranoid overtones: during the period 1962–4 there had been *The Manchurian Candidate*, *Doctor Strangelove* and *Seven Days in May*. However, in these films the overtones were founded in a fear of Communism: an external threat to the nation. *Mickey One* carries the overtones into an internal, urban environment; a development which has also been seen in more recent films. In their different ways, *See You in Hell*, *Darling* and *Seconds* and *Point Blank* and *The Power* all possess, to a greater or lesser degree, generally undefined paranoid overtones. (Welles's *The Trial* is a separate case, since it was made in Europe and in any event is not established in 'time and place' like these films.) This does suggest the prevalence of such fears in modern American society and gives additional weight to Penn's rather apocalyptic assertion above. It is not entirely irrelevant that such overtones are also present in a number of Hollywood films of the early 1950s, where they are clearly related to the McCarthy witch-hunts.

Mickey One was made by Penn with sufficient freedom to enable him to ignore the Hollywood 'system' completely. To Robin Wood, in his book on Penn,³ this is a loss – he considers that here Penn has 'attempted to deny the American side of his parentage' with the result that 'most of the richness and complexity of Penn's other films is absent in *Mickey One*'. A central defect that he sees in the film is the confusion between its different levels – naturalistic and symbolic. On the other hand, Albert Johnson, in acclaiming the film's originality, states that it is 'all symbolic narrative'. Since these two attitudes to the work seem contradictory and since they relate to the film's 'basic conception', it would be useful to examine them at this stage.

The extent to which Penn has departed from the traditional narrative structure of the Hollywood film can, I think, be seen by comparing *Mickey One* with Welles's *The Trial*. This

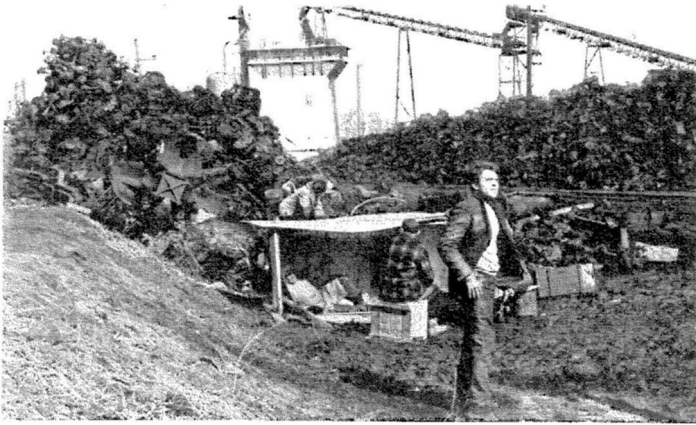
Mickey comes out for his audition. On the stage: Ed Castle, George Berson and Jenny



shows that, even though Penn has adapted the structure quite freely, he has nevertheless kept to its *framework*. In *The Trial* the locations are unreal; the story 'has the logic of a dream'. *Mickey One* may have a number of scenes with a similar nightmarish atmosphere to this film, but the events do take place in actual city locations and the story does develop in an ordinary narrative form, with at least some naturalistic relationships (Mickey and Jenny Drayton; Mickey and his agent, George Berson). There is nothing particularly symbolic for example in the scene where Mickey goes into a night-club and beats the compere to his own corny jokes: he is merely trying himself out, and testing the atmosphere. The scene convinces him that he could start again as a night-club comedian, and in the next scene he gets an agent. This is straightforward narrative.

For myself, I find the use of the term 'symbolic narrative' rather confusing and not particularly helpful. Johnson elaborates it, speaking of scenes of 'symbolic fantasy' (exemplified in the scene with the Japanese artist's Tingley-type 'YES' machine) and of 'symbolic realism' (exemplified in Mickey's audition with the unidentified voice) but this tells us little about the scenes in question. The implication is that, if the whole film is in a 'symbolic narrative' form, overtly 'symbolic' scenes are automatically acceptable.

Robin Wood takes the opposite view, questioning the symbolism in many of the scenes and mentioning its use favourably only in the scene in which Mickey is 'pursued' from the car dump by a crane grab. This is certainly a scene which has 'symbolic meaning', but I find it more useful to see it as Mickey's subjective vision of his plight. The scene is con-



Mickey in the urban
wasteland of Chicago

structed to convey directly, through the imagery and editing, his fear of annihilation. The scene of the audition is not dissimilar. It is also filmed subjectively, as Mickey experiences it, and has in consequence a similarly exaggerated, threatening form. Robin Wood asks of this scene: 'Are we watching naturalistic or symbolic drama?', but, surprisingly, is unable to supply the answer. Surely the scene is 'symbolic' only in so far as Mickey's state of mind is symbolic. Certainly it happens, and the reason why neither Mickey nor Ed Castle questions the authority from the light booth is that they are both too scared. This, to a large extent, provides the film's theme.

Nevertheless, if I find the audition scene meaningful, I am less happy with the one in which Mickey and Jenny watch the performance of YES. The suggestion of an artist who creates in harmony with his environment is clear enough, but, as the machine erupts with fireworks and begins to destroy itself, one feels that Penn is making a more significant point than 'courage is freedom' (quoted in the hand-out on YES). The image of a machine-dominated society destroying itself perhaps, (we note in the machine the miniature car production line), but it does seem heavily symbolic.

The problems that *Mickey One* raises about 'naturalistic and symbolic drama' are unusual in American film, but much less so in European. It is not therefore surprising that the European cinema can provide closer parallels with the film than one can find in Hollywood. Consider for example the character of Mickey, which Robin Wood finds 'loosely-defined'. This is true if Mickey is seen in the context of the American cinema, but Penn's use of him might more

fruitfully be compared with Godard's use of Charlotte in *Une Femme Mariée*, a film also made in 1964. The use seems to me to be similar, with Charlotte acting as Godard's personification of 'la femme mariée' and thereby expressing his fears about the pressures of modern urban society in no less a particularized form than Mickey does. Penn's. The fact that the characters act in opposite senses to the respective 'threats' (Charlotte by total conformity) does not lessen the validity of the comparison.

Similarly the film which seems closest to *Mickey One* in overall impression (in its setting and mood, its characters caught up in a strong but undefined atmosphere of paranoia) is Rivette's *Paris nous Appartient*, made in 1958-60. These two examples indicate that to see *Mickey One* exclusively in terms of the American cinema is misleading. Penn, whilst remaining an individual artist in his own right, has also assimilated developments from the European cinema. I do not think that his film is the lesser for this.

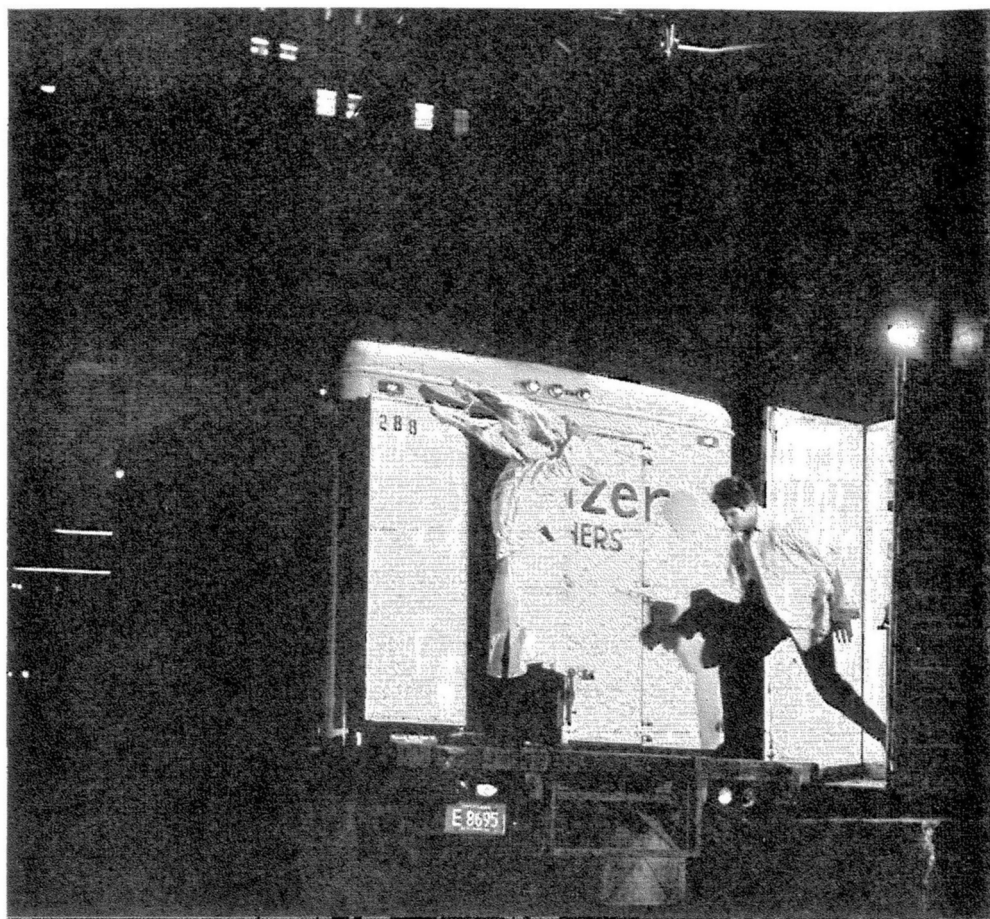
There is, however, one qualification that has to be made to this assertion. Godard does not attempt to make the character of Charlotte seem 'real' to us. This is a consistent feature of his films. However, when we find Mickey also has something of this shallowness of characterization, we feel a considerable loss – for Penn's films are usually very rich in characterizations. Shallowness of characterization is found in all the characters in *Mickey One*, and is almost certainly the weakest aspect of the film. In the case of the characters who are involved in the 'entertainment business' ('a field they control' says Ed Castle at one point) a degree of underdevelopment or, more accurately, suppressed development, is to be expected. The sense of dehumanization that Penn creates in *Mickey One* is related specifically to their world. Yet even the character of Jenny, who, as the film's positive centre, is intended to be free from such 'pressures', seems idealized and somewhat unreal, particularly in comparison with Anna in *The Chase* or with Bonnie Parker. And it would be hard to justify Penn's use of the ubiquitous, schematically realized 'artist', whose purpose seems to be exclusively symbolic.

It is generally thought that the reasons for Mickey's flight and his attendant paranoia are only vaguely suggested in the film. In fact Penn and his scriptwriter, Alan Srgal, have been very careful to convey sufficient information for us to understand these, without being so precise that the sense

of anonymous threat is lessened. The importance of this second point can be seen by comparing *Mickey One* with Martin Ritt's film 'about' the Mafia, *The Brotherhood*. Ritt's film is so straightforward and unambiguous, so concretely realized, that it gives no depth at all to its subject. Penn keeps the threatening overtones to *Mickey One* undefined in order to add depth to the film – through refusing to simplify a complex subject (the mistake Ritt makes) and through the implication of the 'universality' of Mickey's experience. The extent to which Penn does define the threat in the film and the validity of the 'implication of universality', I would like to take up in a general consideration of the events in the film.

The opening shots show Mickey in a Steam Bath, sitting fully dressed (including coat, hat and cigar) and striking a pose before an audience of highly appreciative fat men in towels. It is not difficult to deduce from Ruby Lapp's comments later that it was this sort of 'act' by Mickey that enabled him to earn the favours of the otherwise unidentified 'they': as a kind of modern court jester whom they rewarded by sponsoring through a riotous 'high life'. This is shown in the remainder of the credit sequence: a vivid montage depicting Mickey enjoying a hedonistic existence with girls and cars, gambling and drink. We note in this sequence the emphasis on physical sensation of an extreme kind: the girl pressing her lips on the car windscreen, diving fully clothed into a swimming pool, and she and Mickey smearing one another's faces with make-up. One suspects drugs more than drink at the root of such behaviour, and it is appropriate that the feel of this extraordinary sequence should be so unreal and dream-like (only music and muted laughter is heard on the sound-track); a dream which transforms into a nightmare, with Mickey alone in a night-club, watched by menacing faces. We hear his voice: 'The ride was over. I was trapped. I find out I owed suddenly a fortune.'

When Mickey goes to see Ruby Lapp, the manager of the night-club in which he performs, his questions asking 'What did I do?' are met with an accusing silence. Mickey has transgressed in some way, it doesn't really matter how; however, he is now out of favour and Ruby's attitude convinces him he will have to pay. He tries to get Ruby to name the sum, and to tell him who 'owns' him, but Ruby remains obstinately silent. His imagination fixes the sum at \$20,000.



Mickey flees from the warehouse. 'You'll have to be an animal!'

He tries to expiate his transgression by staying on at the club and working to pay back \$20 a week, but fear causes him to flop in his act. He goes to see Ruby again, in a warehouse of carcasses in cold storage, and asks him to lend him the money: 'I can't appear three times a night making jokes on my own grave.' Ruby then tells him that \$20,000 is nothing – 'What about all the betting slips torn up . . . the clothes, the cars, the lawsuits . . . Christmas, birthdays . . . the *expenses*. What if it's your whole life you're living?' Terrified at the thought of being held captive for the rest of his life, Mickey flees into the night. Ruby shouts after him 'There's no place you can hide from them. You'll have to be an animal!'

In fact we do not see the scene of Mickey's second visit to Ruby until the middle of the film, when it appears in flash-



The arrival of Jenny

back as Mickey tells his story to Jenny. At the beginning of the film Penn cuts from Mickey being jeered off the stage to his exit from the warehouse, with Ruby shouting after him. So at this stage we have no concrete reasons for Mickey's flight, just what he himself feels ('I was trapped') and the inexplicable threat from Ruby Lapp. The effect communicated is of a powerfully felt, but entirely subjective, fear. It is only when we hear later what was said in the warehouse that Mickey's fear can be seen to be at least *based on something tangible*. Ruby tells him 'They were favours only as long as they wanted them to be favours.' He plants in Mickey a guilt at having received all 'their' favours: Mickey's imagination takes over from there.

In constructing the film this way, Penn draws attention to Mickey's development. By telling his story to Jenny, Mickey takes the first step towards coming to terms with his 'paranoia'. In this sequence he begins to 'make it real', as she asks of him later. At the end of the film, when he finally decides to face up to it fully, he refers to Ruby Lapp and says 'I haven't got the guts to live that scared.' This throws further light on the crucial opening sequences. Now we see that Ruby too 'was trapped', and that his presence in the cold storage warehouse was a brutal metaphor for his

spiritual condition. Mickey's flight was also from the fear of being like Ruby . . .

In the early stages of the film, we are likely to consider Mickey's fears quite unjustified, but we become less and less sure of this. Gradually Penn makes us aware that Mickey is not alone in his fear, and begins to suggest the wider implications of the film. We notice firstly certain details in connection with Ed Castle and Larry Fryer, the personnel and business managers respectively of the Xanadu Club. When Jenny tells Castle the story of Mickey's fear of being 'rubbed out', he is so disturbed he crushes a glass bulb in his hand: a device which suggests immediately that Mickey's story had also been his. He has come to live with his fear, but is still highly-strung (witness his reflex reaction later when he almost assaults Mickey with a broken bottle), and his role seems to be that of a frightened subordinate, as we see from his behaviour when Fryer sets up the audition with the 'important people'. And Fryer, although he seems to be actively assisting the 'important people' in this scene, is no less nervous about it than Castle. I also find that he bears a resemblance to the man who was being beaten up in the background during the credit sequence.

The film postulates the existence in the States of an organization which effectively 'controls' the night-clubs, bars, restaurants. Having fled in panic from the audition, Mickey sets out to try and find out from this organization who 'owns' him. But it proves impossible to contact. In this sequence the power of the organization is shown clearly as a real and widespread threat. The restaurant owner who boasted earlier that, despite 'their' pressures, he used his own juke box, now refuses to say anything: a scar across his throat and an axe in his juke box bear mute testament to his reasons for silence. An old friend of Mickey's greets him ecstatically, but clams up at once when Mickey asks him where he can go 'to find out if the Mob's gonna kill me'. Mickey's agent, George, mysteriously disappears; and his office is ransacked. Having finally got the address of 'a gangster', Mickey finds he is unable to go inside: he is held in the foyer and questioned over a closed-circuit TV. He even tries the police, but they are no help: 'Forget it - gambling's illegal in Illinois.' Ultimately he asks too many questions in a club and is beaten up in a free-for-all with *all* the club bouncers in the street, each dressed in a different national costume. (This is a scene in which I share Robin Wood's reservations: it seems both weakly motivated and

naïvely symbolic, and I must admit to being somewhat confused by Penn's use of the love-theme on the sound-track during the free-for-all.)

With the exception of the beating-up, which seems essentially impersonal, the disappearance of George is the first *concrete* warning in the film that Mickey himself may, in fact, be threatened. The reception clerk denies that anybody by the name of Berson had been staying at the hotel: Mickey knows this to be untrue. Nevertheless, even though he admits to Jenny he will be frightened as long as he lives, Mickey goes out to face his audience. 'This time I ran out of running. This time I stay around to see my finish.' The film ends with a high shot of him spot-lit against the backdrop of the Chicago skyline at night. In previous 'panoramic' shots of the city by night we had always seen Mickey in flight, hurrying to hide in the blackness. Here, however precariously, he is held in the image.

A theme that *Mickey One* takes up from Penn's two previous films is that of the protagonist unconsciously seeking 'The Word'; struggling confusedly towards enlightenment. Here the theme is developed within Christian references, beginning with the quotation from *Jeremiah* 37:17, read to Mickey in the mission house, 'Is there any word from the Lord?' The tune of the hymn with these words is then picked up on the sound-track, to continue through the scene in which Mickey watches the robbing of the man whose identity papers he subsequently acquires. The emphasis here seems ironical, rather than sacrilegious, the superimposition of the hymn tune indicating the distance between its sentiments and the violent urban existence before the camera. Later we hear the hymn sung, during the scene in which Mickey decides that he will have to go and find out who 'owns' him. The question it asks, however, always remains unanswered. At the end of the film, Mickey asks the spot-light shining down on him 'Who's up there? Is there any word . . .?' But there is no word, just the spot-light trained mercilessly on him, holding him before his audience. The onus is on him to speak, to entertain. Society, looking on, may be a harsh judge, but provided Mickey can face up to this, he will be able to continue.

All of this seems valid as a portrait of an entertainer and of his relationship with his environment and with society. Whether we can equally see the film as an allegory of Modern Man is perhaps less certain. There are three distinct periods

to Mickey's life, and of the first two – playboy and bum – we have only the sketchiest knowledge. It is the third period which preoccupies Penn, the story of a man who searches out his identity in an urban environment. Yet, even if this strikes a chord with us, the problems Mickey encounters in so doing are directly related to the earlier periods, which have little in common with our experience. Ultimately *Mickey One* is restricted as an allegory by Penn's choice of such a specific frame of reference.

There is however one aspect of *Mickey One* which seems to me to be extremely relevant. This is the development of Mickey from the initial sequence in which girls are seen exclusively as objects for his pleasure, to his acceptance at the end of a full relationship with Jenny. Between these there is the episode with the rather wistful girl whom Mickey picks up at work; even though she seems to give him self-confidence enough to start a 'new life' (indicated by an image showing the burning of his old clothes, a recurring motif), we get the impression that, in sleeping with her, he is simply using her. Jenny, however, transforms him, as we see in the rather fine sequence of their meeting, in which his initial neurotic hostility gives way to concern and finally to his confiding in her, with the story of his past. It is at the end of this sequence that she first questions his 'guilt', and she continues throughout the film to get him to 'scale it down, make it real'. The characters may not be as strongly realized as we might have hoped from Penn, but at the end of the film there is nevertheless the sense of a positive relationship established. Mickey accepts his commitment to her ('I gotta live the only way I know I'm at least free – with you') and, from the wings, Jenny gives him the strength to face his audience.

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FILM CREDITS

director and producer Arthur Penn, *screenplay* Alan Srgal, *photography* Ghislain Cloquet, *editor* Aram Avakian, *assistant editor* Marc Lamb, *production designer* George Jenkins, *art director* William Crawford, *music* Eddie Sauter, *improvisations* Stan Getz, *music*

director Jack Shaindlin, *assistant director* Russell Saunders, *associate producer* Harrison Starr, *assistant to producer* Gene Lasko, *script supervisor* Roberta Hodes, *dialogue coach and casting director* Gene Lasko, *costumes* Domingo Rodriguez. A Florin/Tatira Production. *Cast*: WARREN BEATTY: Mickey, ALEXANDRA STEWART: Jenny, HURD HATFIELD: Castle, FRANCHOT TONE: Ruby Lapp, TEDDY HART: Breson, JEFF COREY: Fryer, KAMATARI FUJIWARA: The Artist, DONNA MICHELLE: The Girl, RALPH FOODY: Police Captain, NORMAN GOTTSCHALK: The Evangelist, DICK LUCAS: Employment Agent, JACK GOODMAN: Cafeteria Manager, JERI JENSEN: Helen, CHARLENE LEE: The Singer, BENNY DUNN: Nightclub Comic, DENISE DARNELL: Stripper, DICK BAKER: Boss at Shaley's, HELEN WITKOWSKI: Landlady, WILLIAM KOZA and DAVID CRANE: Art Gallery Patrons, MIKE FISH: Italian Restaurateur, GREG LOUIS and GUS CHRISTY: Bartenders, DAVID EISEN: Desk Clerk, ROBERT SICKLINGER: Policeman, LEW PRENTISS: Kismet Boss, GRACE COLETTE: B-Girl, BORIS GREGUREVITCH: Kismet Comic, JAMES MIDDLETON: Iggie, DINK FREEMAN: Xanadu MC, THOMAS ERHART, DARWIN APEL, MIKE CALDWELL, JACK REIDY, JAN JORDAN. 93 mins. Distributed by Columbia Pictures, 142 Wardour Street, London, W.1.

William Friese Greene and the Origins of Cinematography II

Brian Coe

2 FRIESE GREENE THE EXPERIMENTER

In order to assess fully the part played by Friese Greene in his collaborations with Rudge, Evans and Varley it is important to establish the extent of his ability and knowledge as an experimenter in photography and mechanics. He was a prolific patentee, holding patents on matters ranging from 'Lighting of Cigars, Pipes, etc.' to 'Recording Hertzian Waves'; from 'Explosives' to 'Inkless Printing'. An examination of other topics he talked about and demonstrated while he was working on the problems of 'machine cameras' reveals that he had, as his obituary notice in *The British Journal of Photography* said, 'the very slightest acquaintance with the scientific elements of chemistry and physics'.³⁵

Although he joined the Photographic Society in December 1885, and attended many subsequent meetings, it was not until the beginning of 1887 that he began to take part in discussions. On 11 January 1887, he contributed to a discussion on a paper by Captain Abney on densitometry and sensitometry.³⁶ At the next meeting, during a discussion on sensitizing dyes, such as eosine, used for ortho-sensitizing emulsions, he 'remarked it was all rubbish to suppose there was nothing like eosine for the purpose. There was a lot to be found out yet. He was surprised at the beneficial result of adding beetroot juice to an emulsion.'³⁷ At this time he was also becoming interested in astronomical photography. Before his demonstration, on 23 August 1887, of the 'Phantascope' projector, he showed photographs of a moon eclipse, taken in conjunction with T. Gwilliam, F.R.A.S.⁶

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As a flourishing professional photographer, Friese Greene was particularly interested in the use of artificial light sources for photography. At a Photographic Society Technical Meeting, 22 May 1888, 'Mr. Friese Greene

exhibited prints from negatives taken by the flashing magnesium light, and said that his experience was that sitters liked the process but for the most part objected to the resulting portraits, saying that they made them "look too old" . . . To reduce the necessity for retouching he had mixed nitrate of strontium with the magnesium powder; in the second experiment with the mixture the said mixture exploded . . . With the electric light he had exposed a plate behind a ground-glass backed with green glass, then used the plate in the camera, and the exposure was reduced to one-half. Mr. W. E. Debenham said that the latter operation amounted to what had long been known in photography as auxiliary exposure'.³⁸

So far, the experiments he described had concerned practical photographic matters; by the middle of 1888 he had begun experiments on the effects of electricity and magnetism on photographic plates. The first occasion on which he demonstrated this work was at the Photographic Society, on 26 June 1888. After describing an experiment in colour-sensitizing of plates, he 'exhibited a plate which had been coated with chloride of silver with albumen as a vehicle, and then exposed to light with a horse-shoe magnet laid upon the film; the image was darkest under the poles of the magnet, and he claimed that the result was due to the influence of magnetism. Mr. W. E. Debenham remarked that the plate had darkened where the magnet had not been covered with red varnish, and he supposed that the darkening was due to reflection between the uncoated under surface of the magnet and the surfaces of the sensitive plate. Mr. G. L. Adenbrook said there was a definite line on the image corresponding with a line cut across the magnet near one of its poles, and that would not be the case if the effect were due to magnetism; he suggested that Mr. Greene should cover the whole magnet with sealing wax and repeat his experiments. Mr. Greene exhibited another chloride transparency with two sharp irregular spots under where the magnet had been and near its poles; he attributed the spots to magnetism. Mr. Adenbrook said they were accidental spots of some kind, and not due to magnetism, which, if it produced any effect at all upon a plate, would give some image of a diffused nature.'³⁹ Similar critical discussions followed Friese Greene's later demonstrations.

On 28 August 1888, at another Technical Meeting of the Photographic Society, Friese Greene, after an unsuccessful demonstration of colour sensitizing 'made some remarks

respecting an experiment he had tried of allowing an electric light of 2,000 candle power to be looked at by himself for about fifteen seconds at a distance of three feet; after which he held a sensitive gelatine plate close to his eyes for two minutes, and then tried to develop the result, which he succeeded in doing, and a strong action of light was visible on the plate. To verify this result he had repeated the experiment with a similar result, and he exhibited both plates for inspection.' In the discussion which followed, several warnings were given about the dangers of such an experiment to the eyes. 'W. E. Debenham inquired whether F. Greene had read the late Walter Woodbury's experience in looking at an arc light. Mr. F. Greene had not done so; the experiment was quite original with him. W. E. Debenham continued that Woodbury's sight had been nearly destroyed by looking fixedly at an arc light, and he thought that that fact should be known by any who were contemplating experiments in that direction.'⁴⁰ Nothing daunted, Frieze Greene read a paper on his 'ocular photographs' to the Mathematical and Physical Section of the British Association, when it met at Bath in September 1888. His paper was called, 'On a photographic image of an electric lamp, probably due to phosphorescence in the eye . . .'⁴¹ At a meeting of the newly-formed Bath Photographic Society in the same year, among many other topics, he referred to his experiment of 'photographing with the eye' . . . 'After no end of failures, I succeeded, using an electric arc equal to 2,000 candles. To-night we will take the flash produced by burning magnesium powder. If you will look at the flame,' said the lecturer, 'then close your eyes, some of you will see an image left on the retina, and this can be photographed.'⁴² At the same meeting he described and demonstrated an experiment in which he passed an electric current through an acidulated solution in which a bromide plate was placed. He used a silver coin, in contact with the emulsion, as one electrode, and a piece of platinum as the other. On developing the plate an image of the coin was produced.⁴³ The magnet experiment and the 'ocular photographs' were described in an article by Frieze Greene in *The British Journal of Photography Almanac* for 1889, entitled 'Experiments with the Eye and Photographic Salts'. It is written in a rambling and, at times, almost incoherent style: 'The act of seeing has so many laws of interference. Though the eye is the camera and the retina the sensitive plate, we have still to find out that magnetism or electricity conducts to the brain and gives us the power of imagination, and no doubt the eye that can command the rays to the

sharpest focus on the retina has the clearest perception of things conducted to the brain.'

'Photographs taken with the eye and the effect of a bromide plate in a vacuum and under pressure' was the title of a paper read by Friese Greene at a meeting of the London and Provincial Photographic Association on 17 January 1889. In it he referred to the dangers about which he had been warned, and stated that after one experiment in gazing at an arc lamp he had had 'a black spot hovering about the retina for some days.'⁴⁴ During a demonstration he 'exposed one of his eyes for one minute not far from a long and vivid flash of the magnesium light. Then in the dark he held his eye near a piece of sensitive bromide emulsion paper in which Mr. Debenham had marked a circle in pencil, after asking permission. The paper was then developed and an image of the pupil of the eye came out strongly on the paper, a little outside the ring, which, Mr. Greene remarked, he could not see in the dark. . . . Mr. W. H. Harrison thought the meeting should not close without photographers being cautioned against repeating Mr. Greene's experiments in any shape or form. Some workers in electricity had been rendered totally blind by looking too much at strong lights.'⁴⁵

Friese Greene also described another experiment: 'I get this air pump and an air-tight box such as the one I have here. After getting as good a vacuum as possible, expose half the plate to the spectrum . . . taking care to cover the other half of the plate up during the exposure. Now let in the air and expose the other half exactly the same time, of course not forgetting to cover up the half that has been exposed. You will find, on developing, the half that was exposed in the vacuum has more deposit upon it. Now I repeat the experiment, only having pressure instead of a vacuum, and, strange to say, it leaves more deposit where the exposure has been in pressure, which is very remarkable. Now I expose one in a vacuum, and instead of normal air, as I did before, I used pressure, and, strange to say, pressure has more deposit. This is very curious; I should have thought the vacuum would have had more deposit, or at least been acted on most. I can only account for it in this way: In pressure you have heat, which accelerates; and in vacuum you have cold, which retards . . . There is another experiment I have made: filling my glass box with oxygen supplied from Brin's cylinder, and exposing a plate in it; afterwards repeating the experiment, only I used hydrogen instead of

oxygen. Which do you think had the most deposit with the same exposure? Why, hydrogen. I also tried chlorine gas, but nearly got suffocated . . .'⁸⁷

A paper, 'The Electrical Energy of Different Developers', was read by Friese Greene at the Photographic Society's Technical Meeting on 26 March 1889. After discussing the virtues of quinol (hydroquinone) as a developing agent, he said: 'When Mr. Swan said one of the most desirable properties in a developer is the property of energy, an idea struck me: I'll try its electrical energy in comparison with other developers . . . First, I'll take pyro. If I put 1 oz. of No. 1 pyro solution in this glass dish and connect one end of the wire to a very sensitive galvanometer and the other to the solution, then complete the circuit; now, as I pour in some of No. 2 ammonia solution, you will get a deflection of ten degrees to the left, if vice versa you get the same ten degrees deflection to the right – that is to say, you pour the pyro into the ammonia. Now, I'll take a soda solution and treat it exactly the same as the pyro, you get a deflection of the needle thirty degrees, and now I'll take quinol (Swan formula) and treat it exactly the same, you get a deflection of twenty-five degrees, but notice, more oscillation, that is to say, the needle is much more agitated in quinol than in the other developers. Now, I'll try Thomas's formula (quinol), with a little alteration . . . I get a deflection of more than sixty degrees.' Discussion followed: 'Mr. W. H. Harrison thought that the alkali acting upon the copper wire might have produced a current which set in motion the galvanometer. Mr. W. E. Debenham having suggested the experiment, then poured the alkali over only one terminal, and pointed out that the deflection only took place one way, and then by pouring the same on the other terminal the movement was reversed. Mr. Arnold Spiller stated that no doubt whenever chemical action took place electricity was generated, but *in the experiment shown* the movement of the galvanometer needle could not indicate the power of the developer, because the electrical action . . . only existed at the moment of mixing the two ingredients of the developing solution, and not during the reduction of the silver salt. Mr. W. E. Debenham remarked that if the whole of the developer was mixed, and then applied to the ends of the wires, there might be no electrical result; this was done, but not the slightest deflection was visible. Mr. A. Spiller asked what was the object of these experiments, as they appeared to have but very little connection with photography? Mr.

Chapman Jones also remarked that the experiments were not of much scientific value, unless platinum electrodes were used instead of copper ones, and even then they hardly touched photography; and suggested whether any difference in the deflection of the galvanometer might not have risen from the large amount of sulphite of soda used with the quinol solution, increasing the conductivity of the same. Mr. A. Cowan asked if the same result would not be obtained by using a mixture of alkali and acid without introducing pyro or quinol. An experiment was then tried by placing gold coins and platinum electrodes in the solution but the result was not considered conclusive.⁴⁶

In spite of this criticism of his lack of scientific method, Friese Greene read another paper at the next Ordinary Meeting of the Photographic Society, on 9 April 1889, this time on 'Some effects due to phosphorescence, electricity and colour sensitiveness'. The paper, in his usual rambling style, referred to the nature of light, persistence of vision – 'I feel so ignorant about this persistence of vision, so the less I say the better' – 'ocular photographs', colour sensitiveness of emulsions and an experiment on magnetism: 'We wrap up a bromide plate, put it between two powerful electromagnets, which I have here, then send a current of electricity through it . . . the plate is damp, and two platinum plates connected with it, which are connected to this small dynamo. Now I have a continuous break of magnetism one way, and a current going at right angles – I will keep this up for two minutes. When I develop you will see the result, which is very curious. I also feel too ignorant to say anything about this.'⁴⁷

Electricity also formed the subject of his next demonstration to the Technical Meeting of the Photographic Society on 23 April 1889. 'Mr. Friese Greene showed how by the action of an electric current, an exposed plate might be restored to its original condition, the effects of exposure being undone. The exposed plate was laid on a metal conducting plate in a bath of slightly acidulated water, and an electric current was passed through the metal plate. Although at first sight it may appear difficult to see how the current, acting according to the generally recognized laws, would chemically influence the film, it was suggested that possibly a derived current might pass through the water, and generate peroxide of hydrogen or another highly oxygenating agency at the free side, and that this might obliterate the latent image. It was suggested that Mr. Greene should make special experiments

to clear up this point.⁷⁴⁸ In the discussion which followed the demonstration, 'Mr. A. Cowan said that it would be interesting to see the result of the same experiment, but without the zinc and battery. Mr. F. Greene replied that he had no more solution with him to verify his statement, but that he had tried the experiment suggested, but had not obtained a similar result to that now obtained.'⁷⁴⁹

The following evening, at the Bath Photographic Society, Friese Greene carried out the same demonstration. 'He then handed some notes to the chairman, which were read as follows: "Acids and alkalies combine through being in opposite states of electricity. If you put the acid in a positive state of electricity it refuses to combine with an alkali. You will find the developer will not act if it is in an electrified state on an exposed sensitive plate, and if a plate is left for two minutes in a weak acid solution which has a current of electricity passing through it, the latent image cannot be developed, but you can wash and expose the plate again . . . Suppose two particles, holding a different amount of energy or electricity, had another particle come into contact with them, it would combine with the one with the most energy or electricity. Suppose you have two particles instead of one, same as above, and two particles instead of one comes (*sic*) in contact with them, all holding different amounts of energy or electricity, the two particles with the most energy would combine''.'⁷⁵⁰

It appears that from this time onward Friese Greene dropped his electrical experiments, and his next demonstrations concerned 'his new process for rapidly producing proofs on an impermeable surface' which he first showed at Bath Photographic Society on 29 May 1889.⁷⁵¹ The 'opal card' process was one in which cardboard was made waterproof and sensitized; a later development was to use sheets of opaque celluloid, stamped with ornamental designs and sensitized. Friese Greene exhibited examples of these processes to several photographic bodies, including the Photographic Society, Bath Photographic Society and the London and Provincial Photographic Association, in 1889. On 13 February 1890, the Sensitized Opal Card Company was registered to exploit the process: on 14 January 1891, the company was wound up, with liabilities of £890 3s. 11d., and assets £340 7s. 10d.^{752,753}

During 1890 Friese Green's demonstrations were of his or Varley's machine cameras, with one exception. On 29

October 1890, at Bath Photographic Society, Friese Greene read a paper on a photographic printing machine, which, by using sensitized paper, would replace typesetting and blockmaking. He claimed his machine could print 'at the rate of 15 to 18 thousand an hour'.⁵⁴ He described the machine as 'the invention of myself and Mr. Varley'; the mechanism was the same as in the machine camera.⁵⁵ It was patented by Friese Greene and Varley on 29 March 1890 (No. 4956).

As stated before, by the end of 1890 Friese Greene was in financial difficulties and his name was dropped from the photographic press – except for the strange case of the 'rapid iron salt'. The first mention of this 'discovery' appeared when, on 9 March 1891, the North Middlesex Photographic Society reported the 'unavoidable absence of Mr. Friese Greene, who was to have addressed the Society upon "A New Sensitive Salt"'.⁵⁶ On 16 March 1891, Professor Meldola delivered one of the Cantor Lectures at the Society of Arts. Towards the end of his lecture he said: 'He had pleasure in introducing to his hearers Mr. Varley, who would show them an important departure in the way of cheapening photographic processes; he could not reveal the nature of the materials used in relation to a discovery which had not yet passed through the Patent Office, but Mr. Varley had assured him that no silver salt was used in any part of the process. Mr. Frederick Varley then exhibited a piece of paper . . . with a good portrait in black-and-white on both sides of it, to show that although the salt used was very sensitive, both sides of a sheet of paper could be printed upon, each exposure not being sufficiently long to set up fogging through the paper. He next exposed a piece of sensitized paper under a negative to weak gaslight for about half a second . . . developed it with ferrous oxalate, washed it, and exhibited it unfixed to the chairman and others present . . . Mr. Friese Green had discovered the sensitive salt, and he (Mr. Varley) had found out last Saturday how to accelerate its already great sensitiveness.'⁵⁷ A report in *Nature* of the demonstration said: 'By associating iron salts with suitable sensitizers it has been found possible to prepare films quite as sensitive as any of the modern gelatine emulsions, and containing no trace of any silver compound. The advantage of such films, from an economic point of view, is obviously very great.'⁵⁸ Some journals, in reporting the demonstration, credited the discovery of the 'rapid iron salt' to Varley; this prompted W. E. Debenham to write to both

The British Journal of Photography and *The Photographic News*, asking Varley 'to either claim or disclaim the origination, and if disclaiming, to explain why it was allowed to go forth to the world as his.'⁵⁹ Varley replied, in both journals, saying 'I may tell him we both claim a share in the discovery. We started upon the work by making a definite study of a series of experiments. These pointed out a direct line of investigation to be undertaken. Mr. Greene having special facilities for carrying out experiments, very speedily was on the right track and followed it until the new sensitive compound reached its present perfect stage. In thus working together we have further succeeded in rendering the process more sensitive by a discovery I had the good fortune to make.'⁶⁰

Naturally, the news of a new sensitive salt aroused great interest among photographers, and several letters were sent to the photographic press. One, from 'Expectant', seemed somewhat incredulous: 'This discovery – assuming the statements made by its sponsors to be true – is certainly the most important that has for many years been made in photography . . . The most remarkable thing, perhaps, about this discovery, from a scientific point of view, is the manner in which one metal has been made to take on so many of the characteristics of another metal belonging to quite another group. The print exhibited was said to be developed with ferrous oxalate, and to require immersion in hypo to fix it, otherwise it would darken all over. Here we have the metal iron simulating in behaviour silver, not only in sensitiveness, but in amenability to reduction-development by an iron salt, and in the removal of unused sensitive material by hypo. Such a simulation seems to be a nearer approach to the dream of the alchemists, the transmutation of metals, than any previous scientific discovery. There can be no mistake as to the claim made for this wonderful invention. Professor Meldola said that he had been assured that there was no silver employed, and Mr. Varley stated that the preparation was more than one hundred times cheaper than a silver one . . . P.S. – Is it possible that any doubt can be entertained of the genuineness of the facts asserted to account for the small notice bestowed upon such a wonderful discovery? Or is it only the scientific habit to disregard statements which, while details are withheld, can neither be confirmed nor refuted?'⁶¹ No further information was forthcoming from any of the parties involved for some months. Then, on 2 October 1891, *The Photographic News* and *The British Journal of Photography* published a letter from Varley: 'Sir, In reply to

the several inquiries respecting this new compound I desire to give the following facts: From a very protracted bout of rheumatism I have not been able to follow up the experiments as thoroughly as I could desire; but nevertheless I have made some experiments in preparing this compound for sensitizing paper. Although I have followed out the formula, and instructions of Mr. Friese Greene, I have not obtained a paper sufficiently sensitive for any practical work; neither have I been able to get from Mr. Friese Greene any fresh samples of prepared paper. None of my results at all equal the paper prepared by Mr. Friese Greene, a piece of which I exhibited at the end of Professor Meldola's second Cantor lecture at the Society of Arts. A portion of the remainder of this has been analysed, and found to contain silver bromide in addition to the iron compound. I give this statement, keeping simply to the facts of the case. I cannot offer any explanation why the silver was present, but must leave it to the reader to draw his own conclusions. My apologies are due to Professor Meldola, and I can only say that I received the prepared paper and exhibited it at the time in good faith, doubting nothing.'⁶² Several journals commented on this disclosure; *The British Journal of Photography* carried an 'obituary' on 23 October:

'In memory of
 A Supersensitive Iron Process
 Born in Spring 1891
 Owing his Birth to two Notable Persons,
 He was expected to revolutionize Photography.
 Many anxious inquiries attended him,
 But he dwelt in secret.
 An Argentous Bar Sinister
 Was found in his Ferric Lineage
 And on October 11, 1891
 He was incontinently throttled
 By one of his parents.
 Requiescat in Pace.'

'What an excellent thing it would be if a number of other imposters could be throttled as certainly. However, perhaps Mr. Varley's courageous treatment may find imitators.'⁶³

On 30 October, *The Photographic News* and *The British Journal of Photography* published a letter from Friese Greene: 'Sir, will you be so kind as to find space in your next publication for my most emphatic denial of all knowledge of the presence of silver in the paper I gave to Mr. Varley.'⁶⁴ The

letter published in the *B. J. Phot.* had a postscript: 'P.S. Requiescat in Pace: The infant with *two* fathers. Such an abnormal offspring as the supersensitive iron salt could hardly be expected long to survive its *unnatural* appearance in this vale of photographic tears. In course of time, with one paternity, its ferric lineage will be established, and the argentous bar sinister be removed by the parent who did not throttle him.'⁶⁵

So ended the matter of the rapid iron salt, amid rumblings in the editorials of the photographic press – 'on some further investigation it was discovered that by some mistake silver bromide had been mixed with the iron salt in the hands of Mr. Greene, and we do not pretend to be able to clear the matter up, beyond saying that undoubtedly "someone had blundered".'⁶⁶

No more is heard of Friese Greene in the photographic press until 1895, except for a curious flash-back to the 'ocular photographs' of 1888. At the London and Provincial Photographic Association meeting, 3 December 1891, 'A question from the box was read inquiring whether anyone had been able to confirm the experiment described by Mr. Friese Greene, wherein the human eye was made to impress upon a gelatine plate an image of a flash or electric light which had previously been looked at. Mr. Haddon said he had tried and utterly failed. It was curious that amongst the hundreds of thousands who must have heard of the experiment, no one had come forward to verify it.'⁶⁷ When the same Association was discussing occult photographs, on 9 March 1893, Mr. Haddon said 'Mr. Friese Greene showed photographs alleged to have been produced by emanations from his own eye after looking at a powerful light. So far as he was aware no one had been able to reproduce Mr. Friese Greene's experiment.'⁶⁸

This article will be continued in the July–August issue.

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Reviews

Films

OH! WHAT A LOVELY WAR

Richard Attenborough, 1969

Oh! What a Lovely War has received considerable praise from reviewers. Approval has been almost universal and Richard Attenborough is credited with a near masterpiece for his directorial début. But perhaps the most remarkable achievement of the film has received little attention. It is a successful British *musical*. How far this is Attenborough's achievement is open to speculation. He has publicly acknowledged the crucial role of the musical director, Alfred Ralston, who worked on the original stage version. There are clearly now in Britain talented people who *can* make musicals, and who have worked on *Oh! What a Lovely War* and *Oliver*. Both films have been adapted from successful stage musicals. The tradition of British musicals has been to build a feature around the personalities of pop stars and groups. The results have been largely formless and dependent for their appeal on gimmickry and on the familiarity of the songs, which are released simultaneously. *Oh! What a Lovely War* succeeds because the music gives the film its form.

The original idea of *Oh! What a Lovely War* was a radio programme by Charles Chilton in which the soldiers' versions of songs were used as a basis for a documentary record of the First World War. The stage version presented the war in the framework of a pierrot show of the 1914-18 period, retaining the songs and counterpointing them with the authenticated statements of the politicians and generals who were responsible for the waging of the war. The film retains these elements, but adds dimensions of its own.

The songs still tell the essentials of the story and the film is created around them. The overture is played during the credits by both a full military band and simple solo instruments, but the tunes are those for which the soldiers

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substitute their own words. The comment of 'Girls and Boys Come Out to Play', 'Oh! It's a Lovely War', 'Are We Downhearted? No', 'The Bells of Hell' and 'Far Far from Wipers' is immediately ironic. At the same time the credits are superimposed on shots of familiar everyday articles of the period – a coronation mug, a Union Jack. Each image becomes more sombre than the one before – a dead moth by a snuffed out candle, ammunition, a spiked club, barbed wire, a skull and, finally, a poppy.

The tunes and images summarize the structure of the film, which the soldiers' songs subsequently develop. First there is the cheery peacetime 'Oh, I Do Like to Be Beside the Seaside', then, in succession, the fatefully premature 'Belgium put the Kaibosh on the Kaiser', the erotic/patriotic 'I'll Make a Man of You', the terrifyingly realistic 'Gassed', 'Hush, Here Comes a Whizzbang' and 'I Don't Want to be a Soldier', the cynically disillusioned 'They were only playing Leapfrog' and 'When this Lousy War is Over', until the final acceptance of the horror in 'Far, Far from Wipers', 'Hanging on the Old Barbed Wire' and, finally, 'They'll Never Believe Us'.

The pre-existing forms of the songs were used by the soldiers who added their own words to try to come to terms with their experience. The generals, the kings and the statesmen, on the other hand, are quoted verbatim. They make statements about the war, but the statements are shown to have no meaning because they are unrelated to the real experience of war; though some have terrible consequences, not perceived by those responsible for them. After the Battle of Ypres the scoreboard in Haig's office reads Losses: 271,128: Missing: 290,000: Ground Gained: Nil. The soldiers are singing 'Hanging on the Old Barbed Wire'. Trivial songs are made meaningful through the experience of war, decisions and orders are rendered meaningless by the chaos they create.

It is this dichotomy that the film explores. *Oh! What a Lovely War* is an anti-war film, it is anti-authoritarian; it demonstrates that what is taken to be the same experience – the First World War – is in fact two totally different experiences, according to whether it is seen from the real Front or the Home Front. But these are incidental to the theme, which is concerned with the magnitude of events brought about by human decision. Haig is concerned not for the millions of men he is sending to slaughter, but for his own

diminished prestige as the man whose horse threw the King. He wages a fantasy war of his own, but the decisions he makes affect the *real* war. The people are encouraged to support Haig. They, too, have a jingoistic view of the war.

Given this, it is perfectly appropriate that the Home Front should be Brighton Pier and that Haig should command from the top of a helter-skelter. The crowd follows the Band of the Irish Guards on to the pier with its big illuminated sign – World War One – being switched on. The war can be presented through contemporary peepshows, puppets and shooting galleries. The details of the period are perfectly reconstructed: for the crowds, the war is a new and intriguing game. It has the excitement of the seaside and is fittingly represented by the pier where Haig sells tickets to the queue from his kiosk labelled 'French, Kitchener, Haig & Co'.

This is contrasted with the war itself. The essential points are made by the songs, authenticated by the realism of the trenches, flooded shell holes, and field hospitals. Early in the film there is a sequence which at first links the people on the pier with the Front and then separates them. A French colonel introduces a puppet show of the French cavalry, which changes to the battlefield where the men and horses are real. It changes yet again to the real men sitting on horses on a roundabout, while the Colonel and girls dance around singing: 'Belgium put the Kaibosh on the Kaiser'. There is a close-up of the Tricolour and the roundabout grinds to a stop. The next shot pans from a toy roundabout with 'dead' puppets to the crowd watching on the pier. The curtains close on the show. Next comes a close-up of a tent out of which the French Colonel emerges to walk among his shattered and wounded troops, one of whom writes a letter describing the slaughter.

This sequence clearly establishes the initial enthusiasm for the war from both soldiers and civilians. The war is a game. At the Front reality is inescapable, but the crowds on the pier see only a disappointing puppet show. From this point the film separates the two responses and the contrast is continually re-emphasized. On the pier, theatre men accept the invitation of Maggie Smith 'to make a man of them', only to find she has the face of a whore and they are to be sent off to Belgium. Similarly, success at the shooting gallery means a soldier's uniform and a trip to the Front. When Mrs. Pankhurst tries to convince a crowd of the

futility of the butchery, the crowd marches off singing 'Rule Britannia'.

A further contrast is made between the rulers, politicians and generals, and the people, as represented by the Smith family. Attenborough has deliberately used well-known actors of considerable talent to play the roles of the former, while the latter are played by actors with little screen experience. We cannot but be aware that Field Marshall Sir John French is being caricatured by Olivier, that Count Berthold is John Gielgud and that Haig is John Mills. It adds a further dimension to the stylization. We recognize these stars and we accord them the same kind of popularity through familiarity that the generals and aristocrats of the period had.

The distinction between the Leaders and the People is further emphasized by the manner in which we are introduced to the two 'sides'. The opening sequence has the leaders of Europe assembling for a group photograph. Each figure or group of figures is introduced in a big close-up and named. The Smiths simply emerge from the holiday crowds in mid-shot and follow the Band on to the pier and, therefore, into the war. They do not give their names till buying their entrance tickets from Haig when they 'report' ready for war.

The actor Joe Melia appears in a number of roles – photographer, soldier, train driver, Salvation Army Officer, waiter, etc., acting as a confidant between the audience and the action. He addresses the audience directly, calls for order amongst the statesmen, congratulates the generals, drives the soldiers off to war and ensures that Jack Smith is shot before the Armistice is signed. The function of this role is to reinforce the fatalistic attitude that the film strikes. 'The war is inevitable', 'the suffering cannot be avoided'.

This does not exclude the film from making direct criticism of the conduct of the war: Haig's Christmas party takes place in front of the scoreboard with 1,500,000 dead marked up. The poppy, the traditional symbol of the First World War dead, is also the object by which Haig is most remembered today. In *Oh! What a Lovely War* the poppy is the recurrent symbol for death, but its appearance anticipates death instead of following it. The Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife are given poppies by the photographer before they are assassinated. As war is declared, he walks into the empty hall with a vast basket of poppies. Poppies grow in

the trenches where the Smiths are killed. When Jack Smith is killed, the vague red shape of a poppy in huge close-up fills the screen and hides him. But there are, significantly, no poppies on the thousands of graves at the end. Instead they are scattered over the hall where the Armistice is signed.

The other present-day reminder of the war – the two minutes' silence after the signing of the Armistice – is also used in the film with a reversed meaning. It does not symbolize the unity of the dead and the living, but their separation. The sound track is silent for two minutes. Jack Smith runs to join his brothers lying on the hillside, but the women of the family carry on with their picnic. There is silence on the sound track, but the women are clearly talking. Only momentarily does his mother seem to sense something as he stands behind her. The sound returns; Jack's daughter Emma asks 'What did Daddy do in the War?' and the Smith brothers become white crosses on a hillside which, as the camera soars away, are revealed to be simply a little group in a whole landscape full of graves. The final shot has the Smith women all in white moving between the crosses. The child's question is answered by 'They'll Never Believe Us'.

As the camera tracks away to reveal an endless panorama of white crosses, it emphasizes the impossibility of coming to terms with the scale of the experience. The graves are not real, though they could have been: the white crosses have been put there specially. Whether the crosses mark the graves of the war dead or are simply film props is no longer relevant. The effect is overwhelming. The magnitude of the slaughter, the consequence of the war are so great as to be incomprehensible. Thus the film ends with a statement of the futility of the war, where subtlety of meaning is inexpressible, and the inability to accept that futility offers the only hope of salvation for the survivors. The film fades into darkness and does not presume to announce The End.

TERRY BOLAS

FILM CREDITS

director Richard Attenborough, *producers* Brian Duffy and Richard Attenborough, *associate producer* Mack Davidson, *director of photography* Gerry Turpin B.S.C., *production designer* Don Ashton, *the songs orchestrated and incidental music composed and conducted* Alfred Ralston, *costume designer* Anthony Mendleson, *choreography* Eleanor Fazan, *editor* Kevin Connor, *assistant director* Claude Watson, *camera operator* Ronnie Taylor, *continuity* Ann Skinner, *production manager* John Comfort, *sound mixer* Simon Kaye,

dubbing mixer Gerry Humphreys, *music editor* Michael Clifford, *sound editors* Don Challis and Brian Holland, *art director* Harry White, *set dresser* Peter James, *casting* Miriam Brickman, *make-up supervisor* Stuart Freeborn, *chief hairdresser* Biddy Chrystal, *military adviser* Major-General Sir Douglas Campbell, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., M.C. An Accord Production. *Cast in order of appearance*: RALPH RICHARDSON: Sir Edward Grey, MERIEL FORBES: Lady Grey, WENSLEY PITHEY: Archduke Franz Ferdinand, RUTH KETTLEWELL: Duchess Sophie, His Wife, IAN HOLM: President Poincaré, JOHN GIELGUD: Count Berthold, KENNETH MORE: Kaiser Wilhelm II, JOHN CLEMENTS: General Von Moltke, PAUL DANEMAN: Tsar Nicholas II, JOE MELIA: The Photographer, JACK HAWKINS: Emperor Franz Joseph, JOHN HUSSEY: Soldier on Balcony, KIM SMITH: Dickie Smith, MARY WIMBUSH: Mary Smith, PAUL SHELLEY: Jack Smith, WENDY ALLNUTT: Flo Smith, JOHN RAE: Grandpa Smith, KATHLEEN WILEMAN: Emma Smith (aged 4), CORIN REDGRAVE: Bertie Smith, MALCOLM MCFEE: Freddie Smith, COLIN FARRELL: Harry Smith, MAURICE ROEVES: George Smith, ANGELA THORNE: Betty Smith, JOHN MILLS: Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, JULIA WRIGHT: His Secretary, JEAN PIERRE CASSEL: French Colonel, PENNY ALLEN: Solo Chorus Girl, MAGGIE SMITH: Music Hall Star, DAVID LODGE: Recruiting Sergeant, MICHAEL REDGRAVE: General Sir Henry Wilson, LAURENCE OLIVIER: Field-Marshal Sir John French, PETER GILMORE: Private Burgess, DEREK NEWARK: Shooting Gallery Proprietor, RICHARD HOWARD: Young Soldier at Mons, JOHN TRIGGER: Officer at Station, RON PEMBER: Corporal at Station, JULIET MILLS: First Nurse at Station, NANETTE NEWMAN: Second Nurse at Station, SUSANNAH YORK: Eleanor, DIRK BOGARDE: Stephen, NORMAN JONES: First Scottish Soldier, ANDREW ROBERTSON: Second Scottish Soldier, BEN HOWARD: Third Scottish Soldier, ANGUS LENNIE: Fourth Scottish Soldier, BRIAN TIPPING: Fifth Scottish Soldier, CHRISTIAN DOERMER: Fritz, TONY VOGEL: German Soldier, PAUL HANSARD: German Officer, JOHN WOODNUTT: British Officer, TONY THAWNTON: Officer on Telephone, CECIL PARKER: Sir John, ZEPH GLADSTONE: His Chauffeuse, STANLEY McGEAGH: First Soldier (Gassed Trench), STANLEY LEBOR: Second Soldier (Gassed Trench), ROBERT FLEMYNG: Staff Officer (Gassed Trench), THORLEY WALTERS: First Staff Officer (Ballroom), NORMAN SHELLEY: Second Staff Officer (Ballroom), ISABEL DEAN: Sir John French's Lady, GUY MIDDLETON: General Sir William Robertson, NATASHA PARRY: Sir William Robertson's Lady, CECILIA DARBY: Sir Henry Wilson's Lady, PHYLLIS CALVERT: Lady Haig, RAYMOND S. EDWARDS: Third Staff Officer (Ballroom), FREDDIE ASCOTT: 'Whizzbang' Soldier, EDWARD FOX: First Aide, GEOFFREY DAVIES: Second Aide, CHRISTIAN THOROGOOD: First Irish Soldier, PADDY JOYCE: Second Irish Soldier, JOHN DUNHILL: Third Irish Soldier, JOHN OWENS: Fourth Irish Soldier, P. G. STEPHENS: Fifth Irish Soldier,

VANESSA REDGRAVE: Sylvia Pankhurst, CLIFFORD MOLLISON: First Heckler, DOROTHY REYNOLDS: Second Heckler, HARRY LOCKE: Third Heckler, GEORGE GHENT: Fourth Heckler, MICHAEL BATES: Drunken Lance Corporal, CHARLES FARRELL: Policeman, PIA COLOMBO: Estaminet Singer, VINCENT BALL: Australian Soldier, ANTHONY AINLEY: Third Aide, GERALD SIM: Chaplain, MAURICE ARTHUR: Soldier Singer (Church Parade), ARTHUR WHITE: Sergeant in Dugout, CHRISTOPHER CABOT: Soldier (Shell Hole), FANNY CARBY: First Mill Girl, MARIANNE STONE: Second Mill Girl, CHRISTINE NOONAN: Third Mill Girl, CHARLOTTE ATTENBOROUGH: Emma Smith (aged 8). 144 mins. Distributed by Paramount Pictures Ltd., 162 Wardour Street, London, W.1.

BAISERS VOLÉS

François Truffaut, 1968

Les quatre cents coups made in 1959 was François Truffaut's first feature film. *Baisers Volés* is his seventh. Truffaut's contribution to the cinema may seem slight, if one seeks in his work any concern with technical originality or stylistic innovation. He has never made revolutionary changes in traditional cinematic forms and has, indeed, expressed scepticism about those who seek to conceal an absence of talent behind an abundance of technical virtuosity. Rather does he see himself as a defender of the traditional cinema, making films modelled on those he saw in his early adolescence. He depicts diffident, fragile, fallible human beings with whom the audience, whom he sees as needing to escape from reality, can easily identify.

The audience he envisages is in no way an esoteric group of specialist cinephiles in exclusive art cinemas. It is the general public, who enter the cinema by chance after looking at the photographs outside: 'I work for the public of the Saint-Lazare Cinema, for the spectator who drifts in casually to watch a bit of film before catching his train.' It would be over-facile to dismiss this concern with the broad mass of the public (clearly reminiscent of Hitchcock, whom Truffaut greatly admires) as being motivated purely by interest in the financial success of his films. On the other hand, the commercial factor must be given some importance in any consideration of the motives of a director who acts as producer for his own films and who, especially during his early days as a film-maker, could not assume that he would be able to continue with his career, unless there was sufficient financial

VANESSA REDGRAVE: Sylvia Pankhurst, CLIFFORD MOLLISON: First Heckler, DOROTHY REYNOLDS: Second Heckler, HARRY LOCKE: Third Heckler, GEORGE GHENT: Fourth Heckler, MICHAEL BATES: Drunken Lance Corporal, CHARLES FARRELL: Policeman, PIA COLOMBO: Estaminet Singer, VINCENT BALL: Australian Soldier, ANTHONY AINLEY: Third Aide, GERALD SIM: Chaplain, MAURICE ARTHUR: Soldier Singer (Church Parade), ARTHUR WHITE: Sergeant in Dugout, CHRISTOPHER CABOT: Soldier (Shell Hole), FANNY CARBY: First Mill Girl, MARIANNE STONE: Second Mill Girl, CHRISTINE NOONAN: Third Mill Girl, CHARLOTTE ATTENBOROUGH: Emma Smith (aged 8). 144 mins. Distributed by Paramount Pictures Ltd., 162 Wardour Street, London, W.1.

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reward from the film he had just finished. However, Truffaut has always viewed film-making as a triangular relationship involving the film-maker, the film and also the public. He seeks to establish a feeling of complicity between himself and the audience and, like Hitchcock, sees the manipulation of the audience as an integral part of the film-maker's job: 'I want to excite the audience, I wish to grip them and, of course, I am afraid of boring or of leaving people indifferent.'

Truffaut's refusal to contribute to the collective film of protest, *Loin du Vietnam*, is indicative of his consistent attitude of non-involvement with socio-political matters. He claims to be the personification of non-commitment because of his extreme spirit of contradiction. Provided he is left alone to make films in his own way, he is indifferent to social or philosophical questions. He claims to have no systematic ideas about anything, no general theories. He states that there are only individual cases: 'People's private lives excite me; it is not their ideas which interest me but the things which happen to them, concrete things . . .'

Baisers Volés was almost not made at all. Truffaut's original intention was to make it in Nice, but United Artists would put up the money only on condition that it was shot in Paris and on a reduced budget. It was conceived as a follow-up to *Les Quatre Cents Coups* and to Truffaut's sketch, *Antoine et Colette*, in *L'Amour à Vingt Ans*. This was the initial idea, but, as shooting progressed, the film became so much a succession of gags and the treatment became so farcical that Truffaut feels he can no longer accept it as this sequel. It is the first time Truffaut has made a film in which the main intention is comic. However, he considers that, although there was nothing sad in the script, sadness has crept into the film, even if it has not entirely taken it over.

It will come as no surprise to those familiar with Truffaut's work as a film-maker to learn that he attaches no importance to being the sole author of *Baisers Volés*. A film for him is a corporate enterprise and he has said that he would not object if there were six people collaborating on the script. For him everything is subordinated to the final outcome, for which the director is uniquely responsible. This can be seen as a slight modification of his original 'complete author' theory, which he held during his time as film critic with *Cahiers du Cinéma* up to 1959. Claude de Givray, who was his first assistant for *Les Mistons* in 1958, and Bernard Revon are co-scriptwriters for *Baisers Volés*. They also recorded hours of taped inter-

views with private detective agencies and owners of shoe shops, from which material affording the greatest comic possibilities was selected – notably the ingenious method of procuring evidence in a divorce case and the incident with the homosexual.

Truffaut has frequently confessed to his fear of inventing unusual original material himself. Thus his films are based either on novels or, as is the case here, on a mixture of autobiography, details culled from the lives of those working with him – i.e. his friends, items from newspapers plus a very small amount of pure fiction: 'I like to have things verified by life.' Although it is understandable that he should feel more at ease with material that is close to his own experience, it seems rather a naïve assumption that, because an incident has actually happened in real life, it must therefore be acceptable and credible on film. Thus the violent shooting which ends *La Peau Douce* and which is arguably insufficiently prepared and over melodramatic was inspired by Truffaut's reading about just such a 'crime passionnel' in a newspaper.

Baisers Volés was filmed during the spring of 1968, when the controversy over Malraux's dismissal of Henri Langlois from his post as General Secretary of the Cinémathèque was at its height. As co-treasurer of the Comité de défense de la Cinémathèque française, Truffaut was spending three or four hours daily on office work. The time available for work on *Baisers* was thus drastically reduced: 'I have never worked less on a film' says Truffaut. The linking passages between scenes and even the dialogue were written under pressure in cafés. Finally filming went ahead in an atmosphere of euphoria, 'as if', Truffaut recalls, 'the thing had no importance. . . . I think it is the most relaxed of all my films. I improvise a great deal. . . . It is a little production; at the beginning there was no script – just twenty pages; the script was done a few days before the filming. . . . The characters are more important than anything else. . . .' Truffaut says he is the opposite of an avant-garde director and that he does not seek his inspiration from the modern world, but is completely orientated towards the past. Hence his films are full of 'souvenirs de jeunesse'.

Baisers contains all the qualities which most people expect to find in a Truffaut film – the qualities which constitute the 'Truffaut touch' – simplicity, tenderness, delicacy, irony, freshness, gentleness, 'pudeur', and, especially, his sensitivity in depicting, in detail and with subtlety, the bitter-sweet

nuances of human love. In the opinion of de Givray, Truffaut is sometimes a little wary of his famous 'touch' and with films such as *Fahrenheit 541* and *La mariée était en noir* he does attempt something new in order to avoid excessive reliance upon this commercially successful, quasi-autobiographical formula. Nevertheless, Truffaut is surely right to say that one is always autobiographical, but that one is so to a greater or lesser degree.

Baisers is a nostalgic film about late adolescence made by a man in his late thirties. The title of the film is taken from Charles Trénet's 'Que reste-t-il de nos amours?' (composed in 1943!), which is sung during the credits and at the end, and the music of which recurs throughout the film. Thus the lyrical, tender mood of regret and gentle sadness, which is to pervade the film, is established at the beginning. The insertion of light-hearted, sometimes farcical, incidents into this framework is what gives the film its poignancy and makes it unmistakably the work of Truffaut.

There is an air of exuberance and freedom as the film traces the progress of Antoine Doinel (played, as in *Les Quatre Cents Coups*, by Jean-Pierre L  aud) through a series of picaresque adventures as he undergoes his apprenticeship in love. Perhaps Truffaut has not succeeded entirely in avoiding the impression of a film based on a series of sketches placed end to end at random, but this appearance of casualness in the linking material contributes to the spontaneity and naturalness with which this kaleidoscope of emotions and moods imposes its own coherence upon the viewer. As the hero passes through a variety of milieux and employments, particularly as a private detective (the idea of this occurred to Truffaut by chance, when he saw an advertisement for a private detective agency on the cover of a telephone directory) he snatches a few stolen kisses on the way. Truffaut has said elsewhere that he tends to see the world, and especially men, from a woman's viewpoint. Thus Antoine is seen as a little boy playing games whose 'conquests', despite his own timid attempts to play the Don Juan role, are due to the willing compliance and tender, sometimes almost maternal, indulgence of his 'victims'. Just as the Don Juan of literature and legend frequently maintained he was, so here Antoine actually is, as much victim as seducer.

Partly by temperament, partly by design, Truffaut scorns the obvious erotic possibilities afforded by such a subject: 'I do not wish to film naked bodies nor embraces nor love-making,

only the history of the emotions. . . . What interests me is to achieve the maximum emotional impact with the fewest possible elements.' His instinctive 'pudeur' is here allied to his conscious aims as a film-maker, which recall the classical restraint and economy of Racine's: 'All invention consists of making something out of nothing.'

Truffaut sees the film as a series of contrasts. Antoine is constantly opposed to someone who is very different from him – a married woman (Delphine Seyrig), an old man of seventy who teaches him the job of private detective, a young, modern girl (Claude Jade), whereas he is by temperament romantic and anachronistic. This romantic impracticality of Antoine is revealed by shots of him reading *Le lys dans la vallée* and *La sirène du Mississippi* by William Irish (on which Truffaut's latest film is based) and enhanced by the information that it was because he was inspired by his reading of *Servitude et Grandeur Militaires* that he enlisted in the army. His initial contact with a prostitute reveals his inexperience in these matters and his need to project an emotional meaning onto what is, for her, a purely commercial transaction. Later in the film, in his second encounter with a prostitute, he has 'matured' sufficiently to view the relationship in purely functional terms.

Antoine is a person to whom things happen rather than an active agent engaged in shaping his own destiny. He is always the innocent party in any relationship. Fabienne Tabard captivates him, gently amuses herself with him, then seduces him – on her terms. Christine Darbon, with her candid countenance and ingenuous air, has little difficulty in manipulating him according to her wishes. By a succession of little touches, she is shown as the one who always takes the initiative; she is usually in control of the situation. For example, when they meet for the first time after Antoine's dismissal from the army, he moves as if to shake hands with her, but she kisses him; she invites him to the house, provocatively makes herself kissable in the cellar and seems momentarily surprised when Antoine, roused, pins her brutally against a wall as he might a whore; she constantly pursues him and in the 'dépit amoureux' scene in the park provokes their provisional break-up; finally, she engineers his seduction and the film ends with the implication that their life together is about to begin.

What may appear at first sight to be a happy ending is in fact just as enigmatic as the ending of *Les Quatre Cents Coups*,

where Antoine, having reached the sea (which has been throughout the film a symbol of happiness), turns to face the camera and his expressionless face is frozen in close-up. One's impression is that the film is only just beginning.

In *Baisers Volés* a sinister figure in a belted white raincoat appears on three or four occasions throughout the film. He is accompanied by his own disturbing theme music and prods us into Hitchcockian anxiety about the possibility of his being a gangster, a voyeur or another private detective. When he appears in the park, just before the end, and comes towards Antoine and Christine, a possible marring of their happiness, even a crescendo of violence, is hinted at. Then, like a figure from Greek tragedy, he makes a solemn declaration of his love for Christine and opposes his sincere 'definitive' love to the provisional variety offered by everyone else, including, by implication, Antoine. Then we hear the sad lament for lost love of the Trénet theme song and the film ends. Truffaut has said that one day he will film the sequel. Sacha Guitry's remark would here seem apposite: 'You know why comedies end with a marriage? – Because afterwards it is the tragedy which begins.'

Truffaut's originality is revealed in his sensitive direction of outstanding actors, his focusing on the revealing detail and on nuances of emotion and expression, and his skill in sustaining an atmosphere of tenderness and gentle melancholy.

DONALD ALLEN

FILM CREDITS

director François Truffaut, *script and dialogue* François Truffaut, C. de Givray and B. Revon, *photography* Denys Clerval, *music* Antoine Duhamel, *art director* Claude Pignot, *editor* Agnes Guillemot. A Les Films du Carosse Production. *Cast*: JEAN-PIERRE LEAUD: Antoine Doinel, DELPHINE SEYRIG: Madame Tabard, MICHEL LONSDALE: Monsieur Tabard, CLAUDE JADE: Christine Darbon, DANIEL CECCALDI: Monsieur Darbon, CLAIRE DUHAMEL: Madame Darbon, HARRY MAX: Monsieur Henri, ANDRE FALCON: Monsieur Blady, CATHERINE LUTZ: Catherine. 91 mins. Distributed by United Artists Corp. Ltd., 142 Wardour Street, London, W.1.

Reviews

Books

WORD AND IMAGE – HISTORY OF THE HUNGARIAN CINEMA

István Nemeskürty. Translated by Zsuzsanna Horn.
Corvina Press.

When in 1966 *The Round-Up* irrupted on our screens, it was taken by most people to be Miklós Jancsó's first film, and Jancsó was freely spoken of as one of the young, new directors. This response to the work of one who is of the same generation as Fábri, and who has been making films since 1954, is evidence of the general ignorance, in this country, of Hungarian film production. Information has been extremely hard to come by, and the recently published English version of István Nemeskürty's authoritative history is, therefore, the more welcome.

There is at the moment in Hungary what appears to be a remarkable homogeneity of culture. There is a sense of striving and purpose, of something achieved and yet more to be done, of firmness learned of experience, and of hope tempered by caution. All this is to a great extent embodied in the cultural life of the country, so that the visitor takes away the impression of a coherent organic structure, to which not only individual works, but individual people, can be truly related.

This homogeneity, however, applies principally to the cities, and especially to Budapest, where one-fifth of the country's population is congregated. One of the most difficult problems facing the country at the moment is that, between the cities and the villages, to say nothing of farmsteads remote from either, there exists a social and cultural gap of about a hundred years. In the task of bridging this gap the cinema is, perhaps, the most important and the most effective tool, and a network has been set up throughout the

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country to bring films within the reach of everyone. This includes a number of mobile cinemas to serve places too small to support a permanent house. Hungarian films are, therefore, made for a widespread home distribution and those who make them can count on an extensive and eager audience.

This circumstance affects the nature of the films themselves. Problems are set out which have a particular relevance for Hungarians in their present situation, and great emphasis is laid on the thoughts and feelings of the young, many of whom, with their roots in a village but their lives now lived in a town, embody in their own persons the work of reconciliation which faces the country as a whole.

This deep and immediate concern is of recent growth, and is indeed the feature which, above all others, characterizes the new Hungarian cinema. When seen alongside new developments in other countries, it is remarkable that all the films which are regarded by the Hungarians themselves as having ushered in the new, modern era were made, not by the rebellious and iconoclastic young, but by experienced directors, all at least in their middle thirties.

The first of these, *The Fanatics* (*Megszállottak*), was made in 1961 by Károly Makk (b. 1925), whose first feature, *Liliomfi* (1954), was a romantic costume comedy, and whose most admired film, *The House Under the Rocks* (*Ház a Sziklák Alatt*, 1958) was a tragic tale, full of subtle observation and delicate feeling, but wholly traditional both in manner and content. In *The Fanatics* Makk put all his experience into a film which examined some of the ways in which bureaucracy and the law can frustrate the best of schemes, in this case the bringing of life-giving water to a parched plain. The object is finally achieved in defiance of authority. The film, without overtly taking sides, exposed a real and urgent dilemma, and was felt to have broken new ground.

Two years after this there appeared *Dialogue* (*Párbeszéd*), by János Herskó (b. 1926 – now Head of the National Film School), and *Cantata* (*Oldás és Kölés*) by Miklós Jancsó (b. 1921). *Dialogue* traces, through the personal fortunes of two people, the events of the years following the Liberation. Though not wholly successful as a rounded work, it represented nevertheless, in its attitude of critical examination, a new and brave departure. It paved the way, not only for Fábri's *Twenty Hours* (*Húsz Óra*), which was made in the following year and which has a direct relation to it, but for

many films which have come after, including, and perhaps especially, the films of András Kovács.

Jancsó's film, *Cantata*, was an examination not so much of public events as of private conscience. It, too, was a pioneering work, dealing as it did with the moral situation of a man, outwardly successful and secure, who is brought to realize that it is not enough just to survive times of difficulty and danger; they offer a moral challenge which has to be met.

Taken as a whole, the new Hungarian cinema is preoccupied with problems of moral survival. The films are concerned with hammering out a definition of those principles which are less than essential and may, therefore, at a pinch, be abandoned, and those which are vital and must be held to at all costs. Visually the films are characterized by the spaciousness which is so much a feature of the country itself. Budapest, lying on either side of the wide Danube, is notable for the spaciousness of its layout, and the great plains, which cover so much of the country, stretch flat and unbroken and disappear over the horizon like the sea. This sense of space and air pervades the films and is in some way related to a kind of moral freshness and openness, a determination to look at facts and to do away with hiding-places.

In the forefront of this courageous, clear-sighted film-making has been András Kovács. Born in 1925, a graduate of the National Film School, he became Head of the Writers' Department at the national Film Studio and a noted film critic and scholar. In his thirties, however, he started working at direction, and, after two years in Paris exploring the practice and resources of *cinéma vérité*, he electrified his countrymen with the film *Difficult People* (*Nebéz Emberek*), made in 1964, Kovács's fourth feature. This examined, in outspoken detail, the experiences of a group of men whose inventions, patently good and useful, had been denied exploitation in their own country through the deliberate obstructionism of authority in its various forms. The film excited discussion up and down the country, and its title has introduced a new phrase into current Hungarian speech.

Kovács followed this with *Cold Days* (*Hideg Napok*, 1966), a film of awesome visual power, in which he explores the tension which can exist between authority and conscience. The subject is a massacre during the last war, in which Hungarians played a shameful part, and the film takes as its

basis an order, still current in Hungarian military regulations, which stipulated that, if a soldier was given a command which was against the dictates of his conscience, then it was not merely his right, but his duty to disobey it. This order was never invoked, and Kovács's film sets out to show that collective crimes are performed through the agency of individuals and that courage and responsible decision are duties laid upon us all.

With his last film, *Walls* (*Falak*, 1968), Kovács has examined even more deeply the responsibilities of the individual conscience amid the pressures and temptations inherent in an authoritarian system of government. But his questioning is so precise and delicate, his exploration of motives so true, that it involves us in abiding problems of our essentially social human nature. This is a film of endless dialogue, but with a visual rhythm that gives a sense of scale and order to the work as a whole, and makes it essentially a film to look at as well as to listen to.

There is a quality of lucid intelligence in Kovács which, in *Cold Days* especially, is translated into striking visual terms. In Jancsó, too, what seems at first to be essentially a visual creativeness is eventually revealed as being almost purely intellectual in its basic thrust and intention. His films are films of ideas, but ideas which have, by an alchemy peculiar to the cinema, been given a luminous visual presence. They are concerned with national self-knowledge, with the destruction of false conceptions of history in order that true ones may grow in their place. He turns a cleansing eye on the past to prepare the way for the future.

Among all this modernity there have been films which, because of their nineteenth-century setting, have been rather summarily dismissed in the West as being old-fashioned costume narratives with nothing of great interest to the contemporary mind. The period setting, however, is a time-honoured device for the making of social comment wholly relevant to contemporary living. It also allows one to explore, the elements in a situation which belong to essential human nature, rather than to the exigencies of immediate, and therefore transient, social circumstances. László Ránódy's *Sky-lark* (*Pacsirta*, 1964) is a distinguished example of this genre. Based on a novel by Dezső Kosztolányi, the film explores, with a compassionate precision, the social nature of man, as it is revealed in the quiet story of a kind and honourable girl, whose physical gracelessness makes it impossible for either

her or her parents to lead a normal social life. The setting is a small Hungarian town at the end of the last century, and, while it is sharply precise in its sense of time and place, the film nevertheless communicates a feeling of timeless immediacy, of sharp recognition, and of illuminating personal revelation.

There is in Hungarian films at the moment a total absence of the introspective, nerve-wracked films which have for some years been such a feature of Western European production, and it is characteristic that, in *Skylark*, the sufferings of the girl herself, delicately observed and tenderly felt as they are, form nevertheless only a part of that complex of feeling which is the director's concern. In a country beset by urgent problems of national survival, private distresses isolated from their full social context are, it seems, a luxury which their films cannot afford. A sharp awareness of the tensions between the public and the private life, the social and the individual conscience, is the staple of contemporary Hungarian cinema, and it gives to their films a moral scale and dignity as impressive as they are rare.

In *Word And Image* István Nemeskürty gives a full and ordered account of the long years of film-making which lie behind these recent achievements. He is a distinguished historian and a much respected film scholar, and his book is in many ways a model of what a film history should be. It is divided into sections, each corresponding to a certain period, and each embodying a dominant idea, so that, although the book covers the whole of Hungarian film production from the earliest beginnings, each part of it has the unity of thought which usually belongs to a more limited work. This makes it much easier to read than film histories usually are, as, although it touches on a great number of films and persons, it avoids the common pitfall of reading like a catalogue. It is, in short, both readable and scholarly.

To anyone concerned with British films it is, of course, intensely interesting to learn of the early career of Sir Alexander Korda who, we are told, 'was not only a good director, but also a first-rate organizer. It was he who devised the method of making films which still underlies film production in Hungary. The system of employing a dramaturge – or literary editor – is a specific Hungarian trait of his method'. Korda was, in 1912, the first to write a regular column in a Hungarian daily paper, and in October 1912 he launched a weekly paper, politically radical in tone, devoted

entirely to films, and actually sold in the cinemas. He was at one time head of film production and himself made twenty-four films in all before finally leaving Hungary. These are listed in the Appendix.

The name of Béla Balázs is of course familiar to us in this country but we learn from Mr. Nemeskürty's book that a passionate interest in film as an art form has been from very early days a feature of Hungarian critical thinking. An interesting fact to emerge from the book is the part played over the years by film journalism, which, from the first, appears to have attracted writers of intelligence and perceptiveness. Mr. Nemeskürty is informative and enlightening on the various regimes which Hungary has endured, and their effects on film production. It is, for instance, an interesting comment on the fifties that the emphasis on script-centred films was in large measure because scripts could be checked, at leisure and in detail, and, once they had been approved, authority could insist that they be strictly adhered to.

Although the book was published in 1968 the list of films given in the Appendix does not go beyond 1966, and some of those listed are not referred to in the text. Zoltán Fábri's *Late Season* (*Utószézon*, 1966), for instance, is a brilliant, but disturbing and baffling film, on which one would have welcomed Mr. Nemeskürty's informed and sober judgement, but he does not refer to it. He mentions Fábri as the outstanding director of the fifties, but does not give quite enough weight to the impressiveness of his work as a whole. He is, of course, eager to show that Hungarian film production is as much in tune with modern ideas and practices as any other, and it may be that Fábri, who has been making films since 1952, is considered too traditional a film-maker to bring much support to this claim. He is, however, one of the major talents of Hungarian, and indeed world, cinema, and, more than any other Hungarian, he has a large and consistent body of work behind him which gains from being considered as a whole.

Another director whose claims seem to have been undervalued is György Révész, whose *Three Nights of One Love* (*Egy Szerelmem három éjszakája*, 1967) is nowhere mentioned. His achievement has been uneven but he is in some ways the most personal of all Hungarian directors. In *Three Nights* he combines music (by György Ránki), poems (by István Vas), script (by Miklós Huby from his own play), and images (by Tamás Somló who has photographed all Jancsó's films but

the last), into a unique and original work. Like his *Land of Angels* (*Angyalok Földje*, 1962, also scripted by Miklós Hubay), it uses a formal structure to embody a deeply lyrical intention.

Part of the structure of *Land of Angels* is supplied by a haunting song which runs through the film, not as a chorus but as an integral part of the development. It is perhaps because the Hungarians take music so much for granted that Mr. Nemeskürty makes no mention of the truly remarkable quality of much that is written for the cinema. He is not alone in this – but composers like Ránki, already mentioned, János Gonda, whose music was so important a part of István Szabó's *Father* (*Apa*), Szabolcs Fényes who wrote the haunting score for *Late Season*, and András Mihály (*Land of Angels*), are too good, and their contribution too important, to be left out.

For the same reason, perhaps, the book makes no mention of acting which, in Hungarian films, is outstanding. All actors are trained for both stage and screen, and, since there is no star system as we know it, it is normal to find the smallest parts in one film taken by the leading players of another. This in any film makes for a strong supporting structure, and, in a film like *Skylark*, where we are put in presence of a whole community, it gives to the framework of the story a remarkable solidity and richness. Appraisal is not the main purpose of the book, but it would have been interesting to have been told something of the training which produces acting of this quality, since stage experience is in itself by no means a guarantee of excellence on the screen. There are, too, only brief references to the National Film School, which appears with tantalizing frequency in the resumé of many a director's training and experience.

These things apart, however, the book is a mine of information, though its use as a work of reference would have been greatly enhanced by a comprehensive index, instead of one confined to film titles. The translation is for the most part clear and readable, though one has occasionally to make a conscious adjustment to phrases like 'film art' which are used far more freely than it is currently fashionable to do here. The illustrations are good and well displayed, but again it would have been valuable to have had the actors named as well as the directors, even though this might have seemed to the writer and publishers to entail a mistaken shifting of emphasis.

But these are counsels of perfection. As the book stands, it gives in concise and readable form a full, detailed, and knowledgeable account of a national cinema which is held by many to be currently the most exciting in Europe, and by some the most exciting anywhere.

SUZANNE BUDGEN

CENSORSHIP OF THE MOVIES

Richard S. Randall. *University of Wisconsin Press.*

The embodiment in a supreme constitution of rights and liberties considered of fundamental importance is not an altogether futile exercise. It has a consequential advantage, in that by bringing such rights within the purview of judicial consideration, it creates a forum in which their nature may from time to time be discussed, in which questions of their infringement may be formulated with precision and meticulously argued, and in which current legislation and executive action may be publicly measured against them.

Censorship of the cinema is a *prima facie* violation of the right to free speech. In England it claims a tortuous descent from a statute dealing with fire safety, and has slipped into acceptance without occasion for serious debate. Judicial discussions of film censorship in the United States, where freedom of speech is, in principle, guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution, is accordingly of more than academic interest to the English reader. *Censorship of the Movies* traces, briefly and with remarkable clarity, the development of the American case law from the decision of the Supreme Court in *Mutual Film Corp. v. Ohio* (1915) to the decision of the same court in *Freedman v. Maryland* (1965).

In the earlier case Justice McKenna, rejecting the claim of cinema to fall within the free speech provision of the Ohio constitution, said:

The exhibition of motion pictures is a business pure and simple, originated and conducted for profit . . . not to be regarded, nor intended to be regarded by the Ohio constitution, we think, as part of the press of the country or as organs of public opinion. They are mere representations of events, of ideas and sentiments published and known; vivid, useful and entertaining, no doubt, but . . . capable of evil, having power for it, the greater because of their attractiveness and manner of exhibition.

Sarah Cockburn is a Barrister at Law and has given lectures on film censorship for the B.F.I.

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It was not until *Burstyn v. Wilson* (1951) that the Court reconsidered this view, reaching the conclusion that motion pictures were 'a significant medium for the communication of ideas' and so entitled to the protection of the First Amendment.

The subsequent fourteen years confined legal censorship within ever narrower limits. As things now stand, a law requiring films to be shown to a censorship board before exhibition may still be valid under the Constitution; but only where it seeks to prevent the exhibition of films the showing of which would in any case be unlawful – meaning, in practice, films which are criminally obscene. If it objects to any film, the censoring body is required to bring the matter into court by applying for an injunction to restrain exhibition; and provision must be made for any issue so raised to be expeditiously heard and determined.

The precise significance of these decisions depends to a considerable extent on what is meant by 'obscene'; and Dr. Randall includes a useful discussion of the present American law on obscenity in general. The present position is by no means clear; but there is little doubt that the standards laid down by the Supreme Court are markedly more liberal than those obtaining in England under the Obscene Publications Act 1959.

From the strictly legal point of view, then, the United States may be regarded as a very haven of liberalism. As a political scientist, however, Dr. Randall does not confine himself to the purely legal aspects. A considerable portion of his book is concerned with the workings of 'informal censorship'. This includes, as one would expect, the type of censorship imposed by private pressure groups, such as the Legion of Decency, and enforced by the boycotting of cinemas, campaigns in the Press, etc.

Dr. Randall also uses the term to cover the various devices by which the local police may indirectly influence the exhibition policy of a cinema. One device is to threaten prosecution for obscenity which the exhibitor cannot afford to defend. Another is to prosecute for technical infringements of regulations not normally enforced. (These two kinds of informal censorship are closely linked, since the American system makes police forces highly sensitive to local political pressure.) In particular, there is a detailed account of the experience of Nico Jacobellis, the manager of an Ohio

cinema which showed *Les Amants*, whose conviction for obscenity was reversed by the Supreme Court in 1964.

The only aspect of Dr. Randall's admirable analysis which one might be inclined to criticize is his tendency to treat 'the censorship interest' – like the Catholic interest or the cotton-growing interest – as a constant and autonomous political element. The influence of those who hold, independently of any other political or sectional attitude, that the content of films should be subject to some control, is clearly not to be discounted. But it is also important to take account of the fact that a section of the community, otherwise indifferent, may become part of the censorship interest when a film or series of films is made which appears to comment adversely upon it. Censorship so motivated is a graver threat to the freedom of the cinema as 'a medium for the expression of ideas' than mere prudery or paternalism. To ban a film for showing a naked nipple is merely absurd; to ban it because it attacks the doctrines of Roman Catholicism is a serious matter.

Though Dr. Randall's sympathies are manifestly libertarian, his aim is to give an objective account; he deliberately excludes any direct discussion of the grounds on which censorship may be defended or attacked. He is concerned to suggest, however, that legal victories over censorship may not only be of limited benefit but may even be actually detrimental to the cause of cinematic freedom. He admits that the evidence available is insufficient to support any definite conclusion; but it does suggest that the effect of abolishing legal censorship is to provoke greater activity among the 'informal censors'. He argues convincingly that informal censorship, on any considerable scale, may exert a far more oppressive and deadening restraint on the cinema than the formal variety. Informal censorship is directed against the exhibitor rather than the maker of a film and so attacks at the point where there is least likely to be effective resistance.

His thesis is, in short, that, whether or not there is any need for censorship, there is unquestionably a demand for it, and that it may be safer for this to be met by legislation than left to express itself through other channels. It is a hypothesis worthy of serious attention – though some very barbarous laws have been defended by similar arguments.

If the acceptance of legal censorship is a counsel of despair, the only answer is to secure that opposition is as active and

as widespread as the demand for it. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that opposition to censorship is not a minority concern: censorship is an interference not only with the freedom of the artist but also with that of his potential audience. It is for those who contend that interference is necessary to establish their case.

SARAH C. COCKBURN.

THE ORIGINS OF THE MOTION PICTURE

D. B. Thomas, B.Sc., Ph.D. *A Science Museum booklet 1964. Her Majesty's Stationery Office.* 2s. 6d.

THE FIRST COLOUR MOTION PICTURES

D. B. Thomas, B.Sc., Ph.D. *A Science Museum Monograph 1969. Her Majesty's Stationery Office.* 6s.

Among the increasing numbers of books and publications on the cinema there are few which deal with the origins and technical development of cinematography. Fewer still are either adequate or accurate. For this reason the recent publication by the Science Museum of booklets dealing with the early processes of photography is very welcome. Two of these publications, concerned with early cinematography, are written by Dr. D. B. Thomas, Deputy Keeper in the Department of Chemistry.

The Origins of the Motion Picture covers the pre-history of the cinema, ending in 1896 with the introduction of cinematography proper. The booklet first describes the development of the magic lantern, the growth of photography and the introduction of optical toys using persistence of vision for their effects. The contributions of the 'chronophotographers', notably Muybridge and Marey, are discussed, together with the interesting but unsuccessful experiments of English inventors, such as Friese Greene, before 1890. The arrival of the Edison Kinetoscope in 1893, and the subsequent projection of films by the Lumière Brothers in France and by Birt Acres and Robert Paul in England end the story of the birth of the cinema.

Although only thirty-two pages long, this attractive booklet carries over forty illustrations which complement the accurate text. Indeed, the only statement in any doubt is the attribution, on p. 26, of perforated film to Friese Greene in

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1890 – this is not supported by contemporary evidence. The attractive presentation and low price should make it both popular with, and suitable for, children.

Dr. Thomas's most recent monograph *The First Colour Motion Pictures* deals principally with Kinemacolor – the first commercially successful colour process used in the cinema. A brief outline of Clerk Maxwell's demonstration in 1861 of the first method of colour photography, employing an additive mixture of red, green and blue images, is followed by a description of the hand and stencil colouring methods used to produce the first 'coloured' films. The adaption of Clerk Maxwell's process to cinematography by Lee and Turner is described and illustrated. The story continues with the financing of this unsuccessful process by the showman, Charles Urban, who then turned to G. A. Smith, an English pioneer film-maker. Smith simplified the process by using a two-colour analysis to produce a workable system, patented in 1906 and later commercially introduced as Kinemacolor. A camera running at thirty-two frames per second was fitted with a rotating filter wheel with red and green segments. Alternate frames on a black and white negative film were thus recorded through the red or green sectors. A black and white print from this negative was subsequently projected on a machine also fitted with a rotating filter wheel. Persistence of vision produced an additive synthesis of the successive red and green images, giving a usable if limited range of colour. The process, first publicly demonstrated in 1908 was in commercial use all over the world after 1910. Among Kinemacolor's most impressive productions was a feature-length record of the Durbar at Delhi in 1911 in honour of King George V. The booklet ends with a survey of other early processes based on, or contemporaneous with, Kinemacolor.

Once again there is a generous supply of illustrations – in forty-four pages there are thirty-two pictures, many of them whole page size. The text is both accurate and readable, although inevitably the more specialized subject makes it a little less suitable for the general reader.

Both publications are models of what popular writing on technical matters should be – accurate without being excessively academic and thoroughly illustrated. They should be required reading for all interested in the history of film.

BRIAN W. COE

FILM MAKERS ON FILM MAKING:
STATEMENTS ON THEIR ART BY
THIRTY DIRECTORS

Ed. Harry M. Geduld, *University of Indiana Press*, \$6.75.

In a collection of reprints such as this, the reader should be able to discover either material obtainable only with difficulty elsewhere, or material of first-class quality enhanced by the context within which it is placed. Regrettably, this volume of interviews and articles by famous directors falls between two stools; the cumulative effect is not stimulating. The editor, Harry M. Geduld, is Associate Professor in the Departments of English and Comparative Literature at Indiana University and Chairman of the Indiana University Film Study series. One has the impression from his thirteen-page introduction that he feels something of a pioneer in placing this anthology before the public – hence a rather basic survey of the potential, problems, and limitations of the medium. Too elementary for the serious film-goer, it reads like some kind of crash course in the principles of film aesthetics. However, this is not particularly important since it bears a minimal relation to the contents of the book.

The book is divided into two sections. The first, entitled 'Pioneers and Prophets', contains contributions from such film makers as Lumière, Cecil Hepworth, Mack Sennett, Griffith, Chaplin, von Stroheim and Flaherty. The second section, 'Film Masters and Film Mentors', is concerned with reproducing the statements of a selection of more modern directors including Hitchcock, Resnais, Bergman, Antonioni, Lang, Welles and Kenneth Anger.

There is no link between the writings beyond that of their having been written by film directors of some eminence. They gain little from such juxtaposition. Nor does it appear to have been the editor's policy to revive articles or interviews of value that have lain buried in the back numbers of some of the less accessible journals. It is difficult for instance, to see the value of reprinting a small chunk of Chaplin's autobiography or even 'How to throw a Pie' from Mack Sennett's *King of Comedy* (hilarious though it be) unless the pieces are to gain from their position in relation to the other writings. *Sight and Sound*, *Films and Filming* and *Film Culture* figure prominently in the list of acknowledgements: the two latter provide some of the more noteworthy pieces. For example, Resnais'

Margaret Tarratt
lectures on film at
Hornsey College of
Art and is on the
lecture panel of the
B.F.I.

'Trying to understand my own Film' and Resnais' and Robbe-Grillet's 'Last Words on Last Year' (from a translation in *Films and Filming* from *Cahiers du Cinema*); the transcript of Antonioni's discussion of his films with students and staff of the *Centro Sperimentale* (originally printed in *Bianco e Nero* and reprinted in translation in *Film Culture*, 1962); Ingmar Bergman's metaphysical 'guided tour' of his 'internal studios' also reprinted from *Film Culture*. This is worth reading for the light it throws on a film such as *Ansiktet* (The Face) as it touches upon the ethics of dealing in illusion. 'I have calculated that if I see a film that lasts an hour I am in fact plunged for twenty minutes in total darkness. In making a film, therefore, I am making myself guilty of a fraud. . . .'

When Mr. Geduld does spread his wings to other sources, it seems to be a hit or miss affair. I can find no reason to unearth 'Pete Martin calls on Hitchcock' from the *Saturday Evening Post* of 1957 since virtually everything he says can be found elsewhere. Eisenstein, for reasons best known to the editor is represented by one of his least distinguished essays – the last he ever wrote – on stereoscopic cinema from the *Penguin Film Review*, 1949.

Nevertheless, there are one or two items for which we can be grateful, in the first section, if only for their curiosity value. Griffith's 'The Movies 100 Years from now' reprinted from *Colliers Magazine*, 1924, contains his predictions concerning the development of the cinema. Close ups will be eliminated on the advent of the large screen. Colour in film will be perfected through the invention of colour photography yet 'I am quite positive that when a century has passed, all thought of our so-called speaking pictures will have been abandoned. It will never be possible to synchronize the voice with the pictures.' Flaherty's 'How I filmed Nanook of the North' (*The World's Work*, September 1922) is a remarkable account of his sojourn with the Eskimos and in particular an ill-fated, epic journey to film a bear hunt.

Nevertheless, despite the genuine interest of some of its material this collection is basically a rag bag and derives little coherence from the editor's structure; it could hardly be used for reference. Because of the lack of discrimination in Mr. Geduld's choice of extracts it makes unsatisfactory general reading.

MARGARET TARRATT

Checklist of Studies of Directors

compiled by Roy Armes

- Antonioni*, by Ian Cameron and Robin Wood (Studio Vista, London, 1969).
- The Personal Vision of Ingmar Bergman*, by Jörn Donner (Indiana University Press, U.S.A., 1964).
- Luis Buñuel*, by Raymond Durgnat (Studio Vista, London; University of California Press, U.S.A., 1967).
- My Autobiography*, by Charles Chaplin (Bodley Head, London, 1964. Reprinted by Penguin Books).
- Jean Cocteau*, by René Gilson (Crown Paperbacks, U.S.A., 1969).
- Walt Disney*, by Richard Schickel (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1968). Also published as:
The Disney Version (Simon & Schuster, New York, 1968).
- With Eisenstein in Hollywood*, by Ivor Montagu (Seven Seas Paperbacks, Berlin, 1968).
- Fellini*, by Suzanne Budgen (B.F.I. Education Dept., 1966).
- Federico Fellini*, by Gilbert Salachas (Crown Paperbacks, U.S.A., 1968).
- Fellini*, by Angelo Solmi (Merlin Press, London, 1967).
- Robert J. Flaherty: The Innocent Eye*, by Arthur Calder-Marshall (W. H. Allen, London, 1963).
- John Ford*, by Peter Bogdanovitch (Studio Vista, London; University of California Press, U.S.A., 1968).
- Franju*, by Raymond Durgnat (Studio Vista, London; University of California Press, U.S.A., 1968).
- Jean-Luc Godard: A Critical Anthology*, by Toby Mussman (ed.) (Dutton, New York, 1967).
- Jean-Luc Godard*, by Richard Roud (Secker & Warburg, London, 1967).
- The Films of Jean-Luc Godard*, by Ian Cameron (ed.) (Studio Vista, London, 1967).
- D. W. Griffith*, by Iris Barry and Eileen Bowser (Museum of Modern-Art, New York, 1965).
- Howard Hawks*, by Robin Wood (Secker & Warburg, London; Doubleday, New York, 1968).

The Cinema of Alfred Hitchcock, by Peter Bogdanovitch (Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1963).
Hitchcock, by François Truffaut (Secker & Warburg, London, 1968).
The Films of Alfred Hitchcock, by George Perry (Studio Vista, London, 1965).
Hitchcock's Films, by Robin Wood (Zwemmer, London; Barnes, New York, 1965).
Buster Keaton, by David Robinson (Secker & Warburg, London, 1969).
Buster Keaton, by J. P. Lebel (Zwemmer, London; Barnes, New York, 1967).
My Wonderful World of Slapstick, by Buster Keaton (Allen & Unwin, London, 1967).
The Films of Akira Kurosawa, by Donald Richie (University of California Press, U.S.A.; Cambridge University Press, London, 1965).
Fritz Lang in America, by Peter Bogdanovitch (Studio Vista, London, 1968).
The Cinema of Joseph Losey, by James Leahy (A. Zwemmer, London; Barnes, New York, 1967).
Losey on Losey (Secker & Warburg, London, 1967).
The Lubitsch Touch, by Herman G. Weinberg (Dutton, New York, 1968).
Arthur Penn, by Robin Wood (Studio Vista, London, 1968).
The Cinema of Alain Resnais, by Roy Arnes (Zwemmer, London; Barnes, New York, 1968).
Alain Resnais, or the Theme of Time, by John Ward (Secker & Warburg, London; Doubleday, New York, 1968).
The Films of Josef von Sternberg, by Andrew Sarris (Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1966).
Josef von Sternberg, by Herman G. Weinberg (Dutton, New York, 1968).
Stroheim, by Joel Finler (Studio Vista, London; University of California Press, U.S.A., 1967).
Luchino Visconti, by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (Secker & Warburg, London, 1967).
Billy Wilder, by Axel Madsen (Secker & Warburg, London, 1968).

Most of the American books in the above list can be obtained from Martin Parnell of Bux, whose new address is Lincoln Street, Nottingham. His assistance in compiling this list has been invaluable.